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## SMART & CO., THE BOY PEDDLERS.

By PETER PAD.





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# SMART & CO.

## THE BOY PEDDLERS.

By PETER PAD,

Author of "The Shortys Out Fishing," "Sam," "The Funny Four," "Joe Junk the Whaler," "Bob Rollick, the Yankee Notion Drummer," "The Shortys Married and Settled Down," "Bob Rollick; or, What Was he Born For?" "Ebenezer Crow," "Stump; or, Little, but Oh, My!" "Chips and Chin-Chin," "Stuttering Sam," "Tommy Bounce," "Tom, Dick, and the —," "Shorty; or, Kicked Into Good Luck," "Shorty in Search of His Dad," "Tommy Dodd," "The Shortys' Trip Around the World," "Tumbling Tim," "Boaring-School," "The Shortys Out for Fun," "The Shortys Out Gunning," "The Shortys' Farming," "Behind the Scenes; or, Out With a New York Combination," "Sam Spry, the New York Drummer," "The Shortys' Country Store," "Joseph Jump and His Old Blind Nag," "Those Quiet Twins," "A Rolling Stone; or, Jack Ready's Life of Fun," Etc., Etc., Etc.

### CHAPTER I.

SAM SMART was all that his name indicated, clever and chipper, saucy and shrewd, pert and popular.

He was the senior partner of the firm of Smart & Co., dealers in notions, general merchandise, and anything likely to attract the rustic mind.

There were two partners in the firm, though you might, perhaps, call it three, but Sam was the leading spirit, and the chief mover in all the business, and the fun, too, that the house encountered.

Peter Pocket was his associate in business, both being young fellows full of life and enterprise, ready to make an honest dollar whenever they saw a good chance.

Another member of the firm, or of the combination, it might be better to say, was a big, solemn visaged darky, who rejoiced in as many names as the eldest son of a great house.

His parents were of a religious turn of mind, and accordingly, when he arrived upon this planet, he was forthwith christened Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac Moses Glory Hallelujah Smith, and it didn't kill him either.

In fact, he rather seemed to thrive on it, and get fatter and fatter every year until now, at the age of forty, he was as round as a tub, and had the appetite of a horse.

He had a son, a comical little coon of fifteen, though he seemed much younger, and he, too, traveled with Smart & Co., the father pocketing the wages of both.

Solomon, or Sol, as the boy was generally called, was as happy looking as his father was solemn, and was forever getting into mischief, and being brought to account by his parent.

Jeremiah John, as he was called, the boys having too little spare time to give him all of his names, was a good man to work, except at camp-meeting times, and then his conscience, or his inclination, it was a hard matter to say which it was, forbade him to do anything except attend to religious duties.

Smart & Co. traveled around the country in most elaborate style, driving a four-in-hand team attached to a decidedly gorgeous wagon, a cross between a circus chariot and the old fashioned peddler's cart of our boyish days.

It had two seats in front, on one of which sat the driver, and another behind where Jeremiah John, dressed in a gorgeous livery, sat and blew a big brass trumpet when the establishment was passing through a town.

Behind him, again, on a seat facing the wrong way, sat Solomon, distributing circulars and saying funny things to the crowd.

The gilded chariot was so arranged that a platform could be let down behind, and on this a sort of variety performance was given every

night for the purpose of attracting crowds and then selling them one thing and another.

Owing to the lack of room in the interior of the wagon, only a limited supply of goods was carried, but Sam Sharp got over this difficulty by having his things shipped in varying quantities to different points along the line of his route, stopping to get them as they were needed.

Sam and Peter had started out with a great flourish of trumpets, the team consisting of four thorough-breds, which attracted the attention of all hands.

An unlucky horse trade, indulged in by Sam, resulted in having, as the polers, anything but mettled steeds.

When we come upon our young friends, just entering the country town of Squash Corners, we see the two leaders, splendid horses by the way, followed by the most strangely assorted pair of brutes ever seen.

One was a big lop-eared mule, small and cranky and as homely as possible, while the other was a big, ungainly, broken-down nag, with a big head, big feet, a wall eye, and a temper as uneven as a rail fence.

All four of the trotters were decked out with the most gorgeous harness, however, all silver and gold, russet leather, fluttering streamers, giddy plumes, and the like, which made the polers look more ridiculous than ever.

Under the wagon, being also a part of the establishment, ran a mongrel dog of no particular variety, barking and yelping and getting into no end of a stew.

This was Moses, the trick dog, watch dog and general nuisance dog of the firm, and in getting him Sam had been stuck as badly as in his purchase of pole horses.

Here they come, however, with a rush and a clatter, the gaudily painted wagon with "Smart & Co." painted on the dash-board, Sam driving; Peter sitting by his side with folded arms; Jeremiah John with his cocked hat and stunning livery, blowing his trumpet; little Sol behind, scattering handbills and dodgers by the score, and lastly Moses under the wagon yelping like all possessed.

As this striking turnout comes into the town all the old farmers, clerks in the stores, post-office loafers, girls, boys, summer boarders and stragglers came out to look at it.

"What's that 'ere thing, a surkie?"

"Wall, it don't look like a funeral, duz it?"

"Look at that fat nigger on the box. Wonder if he's alive?"

"Reckon they got bit on them hind hosses."

"Oh, git eout! That's done a puppus, jest for show. The leaders is all that's anny account."

"Tararum!" went the bugle at Jeremiah John's mouth.

"Oh, Lor'l suthin's busted, I-vow!" shrieked

a timid female, as she made a bolt for the house.

"Whoa, mule! Come around there," shouted Sam, handling the reins like a Jehu.

The cavalcade stopped in front of the Metropolitan Hotel, as the tavern was called, and Sam, standing on the box, said in a loud voice:

"Fellow citizens, the world famed firm of Smart & Co., is now with you and intends to remain till every man, woman and child in town has bought something.

"We sell all sorts of housekeeping goods, from a clotheswringer to a seven and a half octave grand piano, and give a testimonial signed by the President of the United States that all our goods are genuine.

"In the way of crockery we have everything, from a two cent tea cup to the elegant dinner set of one thousand pieces, bought by us from the late emperor of Siam at less than cost. Note our monogram stamped on every piece.

"We have medicines to cure all the ills that flesh is heir to and some that she isn't. Head-ache, ear-ache, stomach-ache, heart-ache, want of breath, want of money, big head, no head, dead head, sore head, warts, bunions and cures cured free of charge after purchasing our celebrated remedies.

"If any lady wants a silk dress she can have it—by getting it of us at a low figure, to suit her own figure, and set all her neighbors crazy with envy and send 'em to us to buy something else.

"We will take rags, ladies and gentlemen, in exchange for pots, pans, kettles and other useful utensils. White rags, colored rags, black and tan rags, mulatto, Chinese, Indian, Malay, or any other kind of rags, with or without bricks, flat-irons and lead pipe put in to make 'em weigh more. We can use anything, and the more we get the more we want.

"Walk up, crawl up, dance up, anyway to get up, only keep a walking, and come and attend our grand evening, moonlight, gas-light, electric light, sale, and listen to the elegant classic concert given before every sale, and to which all are invited free, front seats extra to babies and bald heads.

"Come and see the one and only Sam Smart, the great comic, sensational and sentimental balladist, in his lightning change act, making faces in six different languages, and whistling in every known tongue.

"Wait for the renowned Peter Pocket, the electric salesman and manipulator of coin, changing money in your pocket to his own quicker than a wink, and all for one price of admission, ladies and children extra.

"Come and see the great negro dialect comedian and dancer, Jeremiah John Joseph et cetera Smith, in his camp-meeting jubilee songs, assisted by his talented son, little Solomon, the cutest nigger in existence, the only chance to see these famous artists.



"Remember, ladies and gentlemen, the sale will take place this evening, preceded by the funniest entertainment ever seen on or off the stage, and nothing to pay for it. Solomon, hand around the circulars. Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac Moses Glory Hallelujah Smith, Esquire, leader of the band, please give us a selection on the bugle."

That concluded Sam's speech, and he sat down amid impressive silence, while the fat coon made the bugle speak, and Solomon gave everybody a circular, whether they wanted them or not.

The crowd got on to Jeremiah John's bugle playing, and they wanted more of it.

"Don't tire the poor man out," said Sam. "Don't you see he's black in the face now from playing so much?"

Then the crowd snorted, for Jeremiah was the blackest coon they had ever seen, and made all other darkies look faded.

"Remember now, this evening, right here, the sale will take place," continued Sam. "This is the great opportunity of your lives. The celebrated trick dog Moses will be introduced, together with all the attractions."

Then Sam drove around to the hotel barn, put up his horses and the mule, and all hands went into the hotel where they found a crowd awaiting them.

"Be you Smart?" said a lanky individual, coming up to Sam.

"Yes, sir, I'm as smart as they make 'em; short, sharp, smart and seventeen, four years ago next year after Christmas."

"Wall, be you Smart & Co., that's what I want to know?"

"Yes, sir, I'm Sam Smart and the company and the wagon and the mule and the dog under the wagon and the whole business."

"Wall, then, whar's yer license fur peddlin'? I'm sheriff o' this town, an' I got to look right smart arter yew fellers."

"All right, sir, quite proper, sir, here you are, sir, all made out legal and as straight as a house," and Sam produced his peddler's license.

"Hm! that seems c'rect 'nuff," growled the sheriff, who had hoped to get a nice little fee out of Sam. "Yew give a show, I understand?"

"Yes, sir, and the best you ever saw for the money; no stale gags, no old songs, no resurrected snaps, but all new and fresh."

"Hm! wall, we charge ten dollars license fur shows o' that kind," said the countryman, thinking he had Sam by the wool.

"Yes, sir, exactly so, sir, where there is a charge of admission, sir, but this show is free, and consequently there is no fee. Go study up, daddy, before you try to squeeze an X out of Sam Smart. You'll take water, won't you? Ah, I thought so. Better put in a little salt; you need it. You won't keep very long if you don't."

Away went Mr. Sheriff, sadly disappointed at not getting his little fee, while the crowd laughed to split at Sam's clever way of disposing of him.

During the afternoon Peter rode around town on the mule, and scattered hand bills in every house within two miles, while Sam was getting ready for the evening.

Just before supper Jeremiah John came to the senior member of the firm, and said gravely:

"I'se very sorry, boss, but I keant' w'ok dis ebenin' no way. Dis am pra'r meeting night, an' I'se got ter tend to my 'ligious duties, sah."

"Prayer meeting, eh?" said Sam. "White chokers, long black coats, thump the desk, howl like an army of cats, and then go home and abuse the children. Do you go to the Baptist church, Jeremiah John?"

"No, sah, I'se Mefodis', I is."

"Well, this is Baptist prayer meeting night and you can't go."

"A' right, sah," muttered the coon, somewhat disappointed, "den I stay to home. Ef dere's meetin' to-morrer, I'se got ter go it dough, shuah's yo' bo'n."

"All right, Jeremiah John Joseph, but we'd better wait till to-morrow comes."

That coon was always on the lookout for camp-meetings and other religious gatherings, being no less devout than he was anxious to get all the holidays he could.

Evening came at last, and the big wagon was driven out into the square, the tail-board or back platform let down, and the fun began.

Half a dozen flaming gasoline lights illumined the scene, and showed off the performance to the best advantage.

Not more than half a crowd had collected, but Sam knew that more would come after the show began.

"Now, then, ladies and gentlemen, we will listen to the sweet warblings of the African nightingale," began Sam, and the coon mounted the platform by a short step-ladder, sat down on a three-legged stool and got to work.

He was dressed in a white suit, with red braid

an inch wide, and red buttons as big as a dollar, wore a white plug hat and a red necktie, and had a banjo.

He looked more as if he was running a funeral than a minstrel show, but he whanged away on that banjo in a way to set the feet of all hands going in the liveliest fashion.

After playing a few jolly airs he started singing a roaring jubilee hymn that awoke the echoes for a mile around.

When he had sung one or two pieces the little coon Solomon suddenly jumped up on the platform, dressed in the same fashion as his dad and carrying a banjo.

"Good ebenin', fader," he said, sitting on a stool. "How you feel?"

"Bery well, Solomon. How you feel?"

"Like a clock, fader."

"How am dat?"

"All wound up."

"Den let her run."

Thus admonished, Sol picked away on his banjo like a veteran, Jeremiah keeping time with him and playing an accompaniment.

The crowd had increased greatly by this time, and stood gaping at the two niggers, the wagon, the lights and the mules, as though they meant to swallow them.

"Friends and fellow-citizens," said Sam, jumping on to the platform, the two coons letting up on their music, "I now have the pleasure of introducing a song of my own composition, sung before all the leatherheads of Europe and the deadheads of this country. Now, my sun-burned friends, if you will give me a few chords I'll give the crowd a few lines. Let her go, Gallagher!"

Then in a loud, but by no means unmusical voice, Sam sang the following:

"Kind friends, if you'll listen to me  
I'll give you a bit of advice—  
If you're thinking of going on a spree,  
Or indulging in any small vice,  
If you've made up your mind to be mean,  
Or on some other man vent your spleen,  
Don't do it, don't do it,  
Just take my advice and don't do it."

"If in business you're making a start,  
And want to get on in life's race,  
You may think it clever and smart  
To push some one out of his place,  
Or think that to lie and to steal  
Is considered about the square deal—  
Don't do it, don't do it,  
If you want to be solid don't do it."

"You may think of taking a wife,  
A partner in pleasure and pain,  
But you're given to wrangling and strife,  
And care less for love than for gain;  
You only want glitter and show,  
Big rickets and all that, you know—  
Don't do it, don't do it,  
If you're really in love don't do it."

This effusion tickled the crowd mightily, and they called for more of the same sort.

"I've got about a thousand songs that I could sing for you, fellow chicken stealers," said Sam, "but I don't know where to begin, and while I'm trying to think, my partner, Mr. Peter Pocket, will introduce the trained dog Moses for your edification."

"Now, Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham, excuse me for not saying the rest, but I can't keep my mouth open so long for fear of catching cold, will you please sit back a trifle while Mr. Pocket and Moses give their part of the entertainment."

Peter then lifted the mongrel pup upon the platform, got a barrel, some paper hoops, a little chair and table, a ladder, and other paraphernalia, and began his act.

First, Moses climbed a ladder, balanced himself on all fours at the top, and then came down head first.

Then he jumped through paper hoops, walked on his hind legs, sat up and held a pipe in his mouth, sat in a chair in front of a table and had dinner, walked on a rolling barrel and performed various other tricks.

When he had gone through with all he knew, Peter gave him a lump of sugar and lifted him down, while Sam, stepping forward, said:

"Now, then, kind friends, I wish first to call your attention to our lightning toothache cure. It relieves the worst pain instantly, and is a permanent remedy for all troubles with the jaw. Bring your mothers-in-law around, ladies and gents, and test this wonderful cure."

"Anybody got a toothache they want cured? Step right up and don't be frightened. I'll cure it in half a shake. Did I hear some one speak? Ah, come right up, my boy."

"I've got a toot what jumps like the mischief," piped up a small boy, standing in the glare of the lamps.

"Aha, I thought so," said Sam, taking a small bottle out of a bag he now produced. "Come right up here, my son."

"Begob, if he's your son, ye must hev med the most av yer toime," chimed in a big Irishman who stood near.

The boy climbed upon the stand and Sam shoved a lot of stuff into his mouth.

"How's that?" he asked.

"Oh! it's greasy, and it—wow! ouch! aha, ha-ha, wow!" and the boy began to yell and hop around like a mad Indian.

"You've gin him corn salve, boss," cried Solomon, with a grin. "Dat's wha' yo' got in dat bottle."

"Corn salve, eh?" returned Sam, giving the boy a shake. "So I have. Well, that's all right. The root of his tooth goes down to his toes, and that's the only stuff that will reach it."

The shaking Sam gave the youth made him fire out what he had taken, and he began wiping his eyes with his shirt sleeve.

"Toothache any better now?" said Sam, as he quickly stuck a bit of cotton into the lad's mouth.

"Yes'r, it's all gone."

"That's the wonderful power of my remedies," said Sam, volubly. "Ten cents a bottle for my toothache cure; reach the worst case ever known; used equally well for a corn eradicator, hair tonic, tooth wash or wart destroyer. Here you are now, a dime a bottle and a cake of soap thrown in."

Half a dozen women purchased a bottle each, and then Sam cleared out twenty more in a quarter that many minutes.

After this Jeremiah John played on the banjo and sang, and then Sam opened another budget of wares.

"Fine, sweet-scented toilet-soap, ladies, made of pure olive oil, attar of rose and lemon juice, the nicest article you ever saw in all your life."

"This soap is good for sailors because, when shipwrecked, they can wash themselves ashore; it's good for farmers because it beats all others that turn up and cabbages the biscuit, so let us have some to remove the reddish tint on our faces and squash all our rivals."

"Policemen like it because it's always on the beat, it coppers the dust, arrests dirt, runs in soiled clothes, can be sold to clubs, is a peeler for cleaning things and holds a high station."

"Soldiers like it because the charge is light, the grade is uniform and it routs the spots. Dairy-maids love it because it is the cream of soaps, stands within the pale of good things, is just the cheese and the cat'll not eat it. Step up, all hands, and purchase. Three cakes for a quarter and a ticket for half a dozen imperial photographs thrown in."

Sam's numerous puns, ready wit, easy ways and his quickness to catch the eye of a customer made that soap go like wildfire.

Peter was kept busy making change, while Sam handed out the packages, Jeremiah playing softly, meanwhile, on the banjo.

The quarters came rattling in like corn from a patent sheller, and before long the soap was exhausted.

"Don't be alarmed, ladies," cried Sam. "We will have a fresh invoice of this soap to-morrow, and before I leave town everybody will have a cake. If I can't sell it I'll give it away, because I'm bound to introduce it."

"Ain't yer goin' to give us some more banjo playin'?" asked one old skinflint, who hadn't put his hand in his pocket once since Sam started.

"Yes, sir, directly. I've got just the thing you want. Peter, bring me out some of those muzzles, large size, to fit this fellow's jaw, strong, too, for nothing else will keep it shut."

There was a yell at this, and the man felt mad enough to kick himself into a sieve.

He slunk away, and Sam, who had been fishing around in the wagon, now set off on a fresh tack.

"Here's your only genuine double-elastic, never-give-out, suspender, brace, belt and pocket gymnasium combined," he shouted out.

"Hook one end to the wall, and develop your muscle, use it as a baby jumper, sling for shoeing oxen, patent door fastener or ordinary suspender. Never wears out, always useful, and as cheap as dirt, cheaper than some dirt, building lots in New York, for instance."

"Buy a pair of these braces, and you'll never be round shouldered, or have to hump to get through your work. Used equally well as a corset or bustle. Worn one pair for five years myself. Wish they didn't last so long. Could sell more of 'em. Who'll have the next? Quarter a pair, and a pack of playing cards given away to each customer."

The suspenders went like everything else, and one would have thought that the men in that



section had never worn such things before, by the way they bought.

It was Sam's glib tongue and keen eye that did it.

He would spot an irresolute buyer far off, lure him up with a wink or a joke, clap the article into his hands, and yank the quarter from him almost before he knew it.

"Now, my African warblers and banjo jugglers, just knock a few more tunes out of your Eolian, or rather, Ethiopian harps," he presently rattled away, "and then, if I've any voice left, I'll sing something appropriate to the occasion."

The clever rascal knew that he must keep the crowd amused, that newcomers were constantly dropping in and that they must be tickled a bit to make them buy.

The two coons played a duet and executed a plantation dance while Sam and Peter played, the crowd just gaping in wonder.

Then Sam sang one of his topical songs, of which he had a large stock, and repeated his first for the benefit of the newcomers.

Jeremiah then tooted a grand march on the cornet, and Sam sold collar buttons, walking canes, silk umbrellas and porous plasters while he was doing it!

Finally the crowd began to thin out and then Sam shut up shop, put away his goods, closed the wagon, extinguished the lights and drove into the hotel yard.

The coons slept with the stablemen, and the two partners had a big double-bedded room on the second floor all to themselves.

"Well, Petey, we struck a gold mine to-night," said Sam as he and his chum sat, partly undressed, on the edges of their respective beds, smoking a couple of good cigars.

"Yes, we hit 'em hard. The show took, and I never saw you rattle things off so fast."

"We'll hit 'em again to-morrow night, pardy—give 'em something new and sell a different line of goods. The place is good for the rest of the week, and Saturday night will be a big 'un."

The next morning Sam arose with the sun, ready for another day's business.

After breakfast he was standing on the hotel piazza, smoking a cigar and glancing carelessly about.

Presently along came Peter with a piece of meat for the dog.

"Where's Mose?" he asked. "Here's his breakfast."

"Let me have it," said Sam, with a grin, as an old hayseeder came out of the house.

A big pin, slightly bent, served to hook the meat to the coat-tails of the farmer as he stepped off the stoop.

"Here, Mose!" called Sam, whistling for the dog.

In a few seconds he came flying around the corner of the house as the granger started up the road.

"Take him, boy," hissed Sam, pointing to the meat.

Mose made a grab for the meat but did not succeed in getting it loose.

"Jewhittaker! what's that?" cried the farmer, turning around. "Get out, yew brute."

Mose jumped back, and the farmer went on.

The meat was in sight again, and Mose made a dash for it.

"Gret snakes! the critter's mad, I swan!" gasped Rusticity.

Then he hooked it with Moses after him, the poor brute being determined to have that hunk of meat.

"Wow-wow!" he remarked, as he put after the farmer.

The granger turned his head, saw the dog following and ran faster than before.

Poor Moses saw that he would lose his meat if he didn't look out and he redoubled his efforts.

He gave a bound, caught the meat in his jaws and gave it a yank.

Away went the pin and Moses had his meat, being no longer interested in the farmer's movements.

The latter, however, never stopped to see whether Moses was still coming, but bolted around a turn in the road at full speed.

Evidently he had no more eyes for things in front than he had for those behind.

At all events, he ran slap into a fellow who was coming along with a big bag of salt on his shoulder.

"Oh!"

That's what they both said.

Over went the man backwards into the dirt, the bag going with him.

Down went the farmer, too, on top of the man and the bag.

"Gol darn ye, what ye doin'?" grunted the man. "Get off!"

"There's a mad dog after me," gasped the farmer, getting up.

"Wal, ye needn'ter knock me daown if there is," growled the other, picking up his bag.

It had burst in its sudden concussion with the ground, and as the owner lifted it the salt began to run out.

"Look what ye done!" yelled the man. "I'll hev tew lose more'n a quart o' salt mendin' that hole."

"Go put it on the dog's tail and catch him when he comes," retorted the other. "He's comin' in a minnit."

Then away he went down the road, while the man grabbed his bag, busted place on top, and went the other way.

When he turned the corner he saw Moses sitting quietly by the roadside chewing away at a big piece of meat.

"Wonder ef that's the mad dog?" he remarked. "Don't look no madder'n I be. Reckon old Harvey Hardtack was kinder off his reg'lar gait."

He wasn't going to get too near that pup, however, and so he sidled off, keeping one eye on the dog and the other on his bag of salt.

As he was cross-eyed to begin with, this was not a very difficult thing to do, but if he hadn't been he must have become so from the efforts he made to look in two directions at once.

His sidling movements attracted the attention of Moses, who looked up and began to regard him with suspicion.

The thought that the fellow wanted his meat entered that dog's head, and he was not altogether pleased.

"A row!" he remarked, getting on his feet.

The man evidently thought the same thing and he dusted.

"Gosh! reckon that dog is mad, arter all," he muttered.

Just then Sam Smart, twiggling the fellow, whistled to Moses.

Away went the dog toward the hotel in a jiffy.

"Gosh! ef he ain't comin' arter me," cried the man, dropping his bag and scooting.

"Wow—wow!" barked Moses, surprised at the thud the bag made, and stopping to express his displeasure.

"Git eout," yelled the salt bearer, hurrying away.

After him went Moses, barking vigorously.

Over a stone wall into a lot of briars went the man, while Sam laughed to see the fun.

Moses kept straight on and dashed up the steps just as an old maid boarder was coming out of the door.

"Oh, dear, what a horrid dog; ow, go away!" shrieked Miss Fidget, gathering her skirts up around her and edging away.

"Don't be alarmed, miss," said Sam, encouragingly, "my dog never touches bones."

"Ugh! you brute!" sniffed Miss Fidget, while Moses came alongside to see what all the fuss was about.

That was too much for the old maid, and she hurried down those steps as though she had wings.

She even did such an immodest thing as to expose her hosiery, in her hurry.

"Oh, dear! I won't stay another minute in the house if that dog is going to be here," she screamed. "I know I shall have ten fits. It's bad enough to have men smoking on the veranda, but a dog! Ugh! that's too much," with the accent very much on the two spot.

"Don't be afraid, ma'am," called out Sam. "That dog only eats fresh meat."

Miss Fidget felt too much insulted to reply, but went off down the street in a huff.

As for Moses, he went off in a corner, finished his hunk of meat and curled up in a heap to have a nap, while the flies buzzed about him unnoticed.

As for Miss Fidget, she went off and told the constable that there was a mad dog on the hotel piazza, and that if he didn't shoot it at once she would report him.

This fellow was the same one who had tried to bamboozle Sam the day before, and he presently appeared in all the majesty of the law and a dirty shirt.

"That dog yours?" asked he, pointing to Moses.

"He belongs to the firm."

"Well, I want him shot."

"What for?"

"He's mad."

"Do you know what made him so?"

"No."

"Thinking he'd have to stay another day in this one horse town. That's enough to make any one mad."

"H'm!" muttered the sheriff. "If he's mad why don't you shoot him?"

"I'd sooner shoot the town," muttered Sam.

"That's got it worse than he has."

"H'm, smart ain't ye?"

"Yes, sir. Sam Smart, first cousin to Awful Smart, of Smartweed Town, Smart County."

"Wall, if yew don't shoot that dog you'll have to pay a fine. Is he licensed?"

"Yes, licensed to bite all tramps, bummers and deputy sheriffs. If he wasn't afraid of its making him sick he'd have had a piece out of your leg long ago. See how savage he looks now."

At this there was a roar, and the sheriff perceived that a lot of the stock loafers of the place had gathered about and were taking in the fun.

With that he lighted out and Sam puffed quietly at his cigar and remarked:

"It's not a warm day when Sam Smart gets the worst of an argument. This town continues to be salubrious and I think I'll stay."

## CHAPTER II.

SMART & Co. intended to remain another night at the Corners, and accordingly Sam had to draw up trade in the afternoon.

The big wagon was brought out, the three horses and the mule hitched up, the partners and their assistants took their seats, and away went the whole business.

Jeremiah tooted away on his trumpet and swelled his cheeks till they seemed ready to burst, while little Solomon scattered hand-bills and doggers by the score.

The tooting horn brought the farmers' wives to the door, the flying doggers sent the boys racing along the road to see who would pick up the most of them, and Moses had all the dogs in the neighborhood chasing after him and trying to make his acquaintance.

Such a turnout had not been seen since the last circus was 'n town, and of course it made a sensation.

The women left their pies and cakes to burn in the oven while they looked at it, the boys forgot all about chores and the hired girls let the "jell" they were making boil all over the cook stove.

Old hayseeder scratched their heads and reckoned "at the old peddler's waggin was good 'nuff fur them, and they didn't go much fur these new fangled fixin's with horns an' niggers an' programmes and all thet."

All the same, the old hayseeder would be certain to harness the sorrel mare to the buggy that evening after supper and "guess he'd jist run down tew station to see what mought be goin' on tew-night," and Sam Smart knew he would catch 'em every trip.

The wagon, the horses, the mule, the dog, the fat coon, the little coon and the jolly young partners made the round of the town and returned to the tavern in time for supper.

Oh, those red-hot, cast-iron, saleratus biscuits, the fried steaks, the butter strong enough to speak for itself, the bitter tea, the leathery cold meat, the salty pickles, the jam and the seed cakes, that furnish the bills of fare at country hotels!

Sam took 'em all in, but he was young and strong. had a good appetite and could stand it, knowing that now and then he could strike a city and get something decent to eat.

That meddlesome under-sheriff who had bothered Sam before, was now trying to work up a scheme to bleed the enterprising young peddler and skin him out of as many hard dollars as possible.

He was always on the make, that deputy was, and he had more ways of reading a plain every day law than a cat has lives.

Sam had no occasion for paying him a cent, but he wasn't going to let go till he squeezed something out of the firm, and he had spent all the afternoon trying to think up a plan.

It was after supper, and Jeremiah John, *et cetera*, was sitting on the edge of the stoop.

Along came a brother coon, slightly the worse for some corn juice he had been imbibing.

Jeremiah seized the opportunity to read a moral lesson to his fallen brother, and at the same time collared on to that brother's button-hole.

"I'se sorry to see yo' in dis state, b'r'er," he remarked.

"Wha' de mattah wif dis State?" inquired the victim of corn juice. "Reckin it am as good as de State ob York or Massachoo, or any oder State."

"I allude to de state ob toxification dat yo'm in, my belubbed brudder. Don' yo' know dat whisky is de wust t'ing yo' can put in yo' mouf? Lemme splain a little."

"Whisky am made ob grain what's rotten, an' mashed an' conglomerated wif all sorts ob 'noxious drugs, my brudder, an' yit yo' puts dat pizen stuff inter yo' mouf."

"Lemme gib yo' a little bit ob 'stistics, my frien', an' yo'll t'ank me fo' snatchin' yo' f'om de paff what leads stret to de grave."

"I tol' yo', bredren, dat whisky costs a heap sight more'n bread, an' it amn't half so easy to swaller. Lan' sakes, bredren, yo' couldn' get a pig drunk more'n oncet, an' yit dey is men what'll act wuss'n de pigs."

"Now, de question is jist dis, brudders: Am we bettah dan de bees' ob de fiel', or am we not? I kin probe to yo' dat—"

Here was the chance that the deputy sheriff was looking for.

Jeremiah John had attracted quite a good-sized crowd by this time, and, seeing that they were interested, had made up his mind to spread himself.

He considered himself capable of speaking upon any subject at a moment's notice, and here was one of those chances that he was always looking for.



If there wasn't any prayer-meeting in town that night he would get up one of his own, for you can always turn a temperance lecture into a hallelujah racket if you try hard enough.

He had gone just so far in his yarn, when up came the sheriff and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Young man, are you going to deliver a lecture?" he asked.

"Yas'r, I is, right yer. Dere am a great need fur reform in dis yer town, an' I'se gwine to set de ball a-rollin'."

"Ah, the license fee for lectures is two dollars, cash in advance."

"Two dollahs fo' speakin' to de crowd an' showin' dem de errah ob deir ways?"

"Two dollahs in advance. If you hired a hall it would be five."

"Well, sah, go to de boss; don' bodder me; I'se too busy. Don' yo' see I'm tryin' to snatch dis yer bran' from de fish? Go to de boss; he pay de money."

"Mr. Smart is your employer, I believe?"

"Yas'r, dat am him, on de oder end ob de pirazzer. Jes' yo' go talk to him."

Away went the deputy to brace Sam while Jeremiah went on with his lamentations.

The fallen brother didn't seem to mind it very much, and Jeremiah gave the crowd all the statistics it wanted.

Meantime the sheriff had approached Sam, and said with an oily smile:

"Two dollahs, Mr. Smart, if you please."

"You want to give me two dollahs?"

"No, I want to collect it."

"From whom?"

"From you, my dear sir."

"Aren't you a tride mistaken?"

"No, sir, not at all. I want two dollahs."

"Out of me?"

"Yes, sir, out of you, and I don't want any more talk about it."

"What do you want it for?"

"License."

"You can't collect any license from me, my man, and you know it."

"I want the license fee for the lecture."

"What lecture?"

"The one your man is giving."

"My man?"

"Yes, the colored man. He is delivering a lecture on temperance, and the license is two dollahs, and I want it."

Sam glanced along the piazza and saw Jeremiah John laying down the law to a mixed crowd of enthusiasts.

"Why, he's only drumming up custom for our sale," said Sam, with a laugh. "You can't collect on that."

"But I will. The lecture is totally unconnected with your sale and must be paid for."

Then Sam fired the whole of Jeremiah's name at him in a loud tone of voice.

The lecturer stopped right in the middle of a glowing sentence, straightened up, let go the button-hole of the inebriated brother, and shouted back:

"Yas'r!"

"Go and look after the wagon."

"Yas'r!" and away went Jeremiah John, while the terrible example lost his hold and fell in the dirt.

"I want a dollah for that lecture," persisted the deputy.

"Go collect it out of the example, then," said Sam. "You don't get any of my dust, and I'll give you that straight."

Off went the deputy and hauled in the tired coon, being determined to make some money off somebody.

So he hauled up the coon who got one dollah or one day, and not having the dollah he was given a day's vacation, and Mr. Deputy got left.

As the shades of night began to drop the big wagon drove into the square, the gasoline lamps were lighted, the rear platform was let down, and Jeremiah John Joseph, all green and gold, and wearing a cocked hat, began to toot "Killarney" on his horn for the benefit of the countrymen.

When he had finished Sam jumped upon the platform and yelled out:

"Fellow countrymen, lend me your ears. I want to make salt bags of them. They will be returned to you as good as new. I have selected for your amusement this evening a new and original hymn; the him who wrote it is myself. It's written in common every-day meter, and can be adapted to the piano, hand-organ, kazoo, Jew's-harp, concertina, phillipena or baroon. Jeremiah, take a twist on your instrument and give us the air."

Then Jeremiah John drew a long breath, puffed out his cheeks, blew a blast that knocked a small boy off a fence with surprise, and then started off on a rattling air, while Sam warbled as follows:

"You have often heard a man say,  
When advised to hazard his dust  
On some scheme or another,  
'Oh, it's not worth the bother,  
I know it will bust,  
I'm sure it won't pay,  
It won't pay, it won't pay;  
I can't risk my rocks  
In taking those stocks,  
I tell you, dear sir, it won't pay."

"If you to a good man should say,  
That it's wise to be stingy and mean  
You'd find out in a hurry,  
After all of your worry,  
That you had been awfully green.  
It won't pay, it won't pay,  
You'll find it won't do  
To fret and to stew—  
I'll give you a tip, it won't pay."

"Don't leave off till some other day

The task that should be done at once,

Don't gossip and chatter

On a trivial matter,

Or show you're a dunce;

It won't pay, it won't pay,

And you'll find, to your cost,

Your time has been lost,

So don't be a fool, it won't pay."

"It won't pay to buy cheap goods simply because they are cheap," continued Sam. "I'd rather double the price on the goods I sell than have you think they were no good; I would for a fact."

"Now here's a little article that everybody needs—bachelors, old maids, wives, husbands, engaged couples and hardened married men."

"This article, fellow townsmen, is a patent button-hook, latch-key, corkscrew, can-opener and stove lifter combined. Can be used for any one and all the purposes mentioned, and never gets out of order."

"Husbands coming home late from the club, wives who go gadding and have to get home in a hurry to get the old man's supper, boys out courting, servant gals with a propensity for lighting the fire with kerosene, and who haven't benzine since the explosion, boys, girls and old women, will find a treasure here, and at the very small price of ten cents, three for a quarter, or seven for half a dollah!"

"Anything thrown in?" asked a four dollah country masher, one of the kind who expect a suit of clothes to be given away with a pair of suspenders.

"Why, certainly," cried Sam. "I expected to give away a grand piano and the deed of a cemetery lot with every one of these little articles, but I'm sorry to say that the consignment of pianos has not arrived. However, if you'll pick out the lot you want, our private undertaker will attend to you in the morning."

That settled the young man from the country, and he subsided, while Sam went ahead and described the merits of his knife-cutter, can-opener and pot-lifter, combined.

"Half a dozen tools concentrated in one, ladies and gentlemen, don't forget it, always handy, never out of repair, and sold for the insignificant sum of ten cents. That good-looking lady in front of me wants to buy one, I know. Peter, please attend to the lady."

All the cross-eyed, red-headed, freckled women within twenty feet of the wagon made a rush, all wishing to be thought good-looking, and the combination articles went down like molasses on buck-wheat cakes.

Then Peter Pocket dressed Moses in a soldier coat and cap, gave him a gun, and put him through a regular drill, that dog winning lots of applause.

The little coon then did an Ole Virginny essence act, while the big one played the banjo, after which Sam got off another ditty, and then, having picked up a pretty good crowd, proceeded to soak it to them.

"Here's a box of our latest laid, fresh churned, Russia leather boot polish and confectionery combined," he shouted. "Shine your boots, use it for candy or make cake of it. You pay your money and take your choice."

Then he grabbed up an old boot from the little stand in front of him, scooped up some of the paste out of a box with his fingers, put some in his mouth, and anointed the boot with the rest.

"Look at that elegant polish!" he yelled, rubbing the boot with his coat sleeve till it shone. "That's what this polish does, and yet I can eat it. No deleterious compounds in this blacking, gents. You can sweeten your coffee, make ginger-bread or stop a leaky roof with it. Five cents a box, four for a quarter; buy one and you save money. There's an inducement for you. Anybody wants his boots blacked?"

"Yes, I do," cried the cheap rural dude whom Sam had already silenced.

"Then go hire a boy to do it for five cents," cried Sam. "You've got more money than brains and can afford to lose a little. Who'll have the next box? Only five cents for this rare combination of shoe polish, confectionery, and baking powder. Don't take it on my say-so, but try before you buy? Anybody want a bite?" and Sam chuckled half a box of the stuff in his mouth.

Then he jumped from shoe-blackening to ribbons, a cent a yard, from them to clocks, albums, plated spoons and galvanized castors, rattling away in praise of his wares, and selling things as fast as he could handle them.

He didn't waste much time with the show business, for he now had the crowd well in hand and sold whatever he put up.

"Remember, ladies and gents, this is our last night in town, and if you don't improve your opportunities now you'll never have any more. Jump onto your chances while they last, for to-morrow will see me far away, baby mine."

"Don't neglect to buy one of our patent adjustable churns, used equally well as a churn, washtub or bread safe, can be used in hot or cold weather, warranted not to crack or rust and good in any country. Every housekeeper in the land should have one. A handsome photograph of the trick dog Moses given away with every one."

"If you're giving away pictures of dogs why don't you throw yours in?" cried that below par dude, who never appeared to know when he had had enough.

"I'm not giving puppies' pictures, or I'd buy up a gross of yours," answered Sam. "I've got something here that'll suit you first-rate. It's a rattle; your head and it were made of the same stuff; the more you give it the shake the more noise it makes. Are you on? Then slide!"

This time the dude thought he had got sufficient,

and went away, leaving Sam in possession of the field.

"Now," cried Sam, "I have here the great Abyssinian remedy for cleansing the teeth. It whitens, beautifies, purifies and sweetens the teeth, gums and mouth. If you want to talk blarney, buy a package, and you'll have as sweet a tongue as any politician."

"One application removes all dirt and other foreign substance. If you have any foreigners in your mouth, step up here and I'll drive 'em out. Who wants to have his teeth cleaned free of charge? Step right up. Don't be bashful, gents."

Nobody applied, and Sam set the box on the right side of the little stand and went on to something else.

"Here's the great wart cure, my dear friends—wart's the matter with your trying that? Removes corns, warts, bunions, pimples and other rubbish. A corn is oakasionally a very troublesome thing, but ash sure as yew cedar thing coming, apple-y this remedy, and it departs. That's a tree-mendous punny speech, ain't it?"

Some of the puns missed fire and some didn't, but Sam went right on, and, catching the eye of an urchin in the crowd, invited him to take the stand.

"Come right up here, sonny. I know you've got a wart as big as a dollah on the back of your neck, and I want to take it off."

"Ain't nuther, it's on me t'umb," responded the youth.

"All right, sir, that's just as good as thumb other place, if you'll excuse my lifaping. Jump up here, my lad, and I'll yank that wart out before you know wart's the matter."

Peter gave the boy a hoist upon the platform, and Sam sat him in a chair, and uncorked a little bottle.

"Show me the wart, sonny. H'm! that's it, is it? It isn't as big as a house, or as deep as an English joke, but it'll do, as Bill Shake says. Ever heard of Bill Shake? I suppose not. His other name was Bacon, and he swept out the Globe Theater after the show was over. Doesn't hurt you, does it?"

"No, sir," said the urchin, for Sam had been rubbing a cork over the wart on his thumb.

"Thought not. That's the beauty of this medicine, it cures without pain. That is, you can't get away without payin' me, but it doesn't pain you, see? That's a joke, my boy, and you must laugh."

Instead of laughing the boy jumped, went over backward, and nearly fell off the platform.

"How's the wart?" asked Sam, as Jeremiah picked the youth up and set him in the chair.

"It's gone!" cried the youth, looking at his thumb.

"There you are. There's ten cents and a bottle of the stuff. Who wants to try my great corn, wart, and bunion remover? Only ten cents and a box of tooth powder thrown in. Knocks the spots out of all warts and sends corns to kingdom come. Who wants a bottle?"

There were plenty of fellows who thought they were going to get a present and they purchased, but nixey present did they get.

Sam talked ahead as fast as lightning, and sold a dozen or more bottles at a clip, switching off on to something else when the trade began to slacken up.

"Now, I wonder if somebody don't want to try my tooth powder?" he shouted. "It's better than soap and acts as a soporific. Who wants to try it. Step right up here, sir, and let me clean your teeth for you!"

This remark was addressed to a tall, raw-boned countryman standing in the glare of the lights.

He was over six feet high, wore cow-hide boots, with his trousers tucked into the tops, had on a hickory shirt and a big straw hat, wore a chin goat beard and no mustache, and looked green enough for the cows to eat.

"What yew got?" he asked Sam, as he stepped up on the platform.

"Tooth powder, sweet, clean and refreshing, makes your teeth white and sweetens your breath just as if you'd been eating sugar. Sit down, sir, and I'll fix you up so your best girl won't know you."

The countryman sat down in a chair, threw back his head and opened his mouth wide enough to take in a whole pan of beans.

"Not so wide," said Sam, taking up a box from the left hand side of the stand. "Not so wide, I don't need to use a broom."

The crowd giggled, and looked on with renewed interest.

Jeremiah John stood on one side, with wide open mouth and eyes, his hands on his knees, watching the operation.

Solomon stood alongside, equally interested, while the trick dog, Moses, sat on his haunches and cocked one eye at the countryman in solemn dignity.

Peter Pocket stood on the other side of the countryman, and Sam was in front of him, one hand holding the little box, and the other in the air.

"Pretty good teeth," he remarked—"fine and regular—no crockery there—good, natural teeth—strong enough to chew railroad restaurant sandwiches, but terribly dirty."

Then he took a good-sized pinch of the powder in the box, and began rubbing the granger's teeth with it.

"Works like a charm," he muttered. "I'll make those grinders of yours as clean as a new pin. Don't move, sir. I'll fix 'em all right in a jiffy."

The countryman had begun to mutter certain sounds which had a decidedly brimstonny flavor about them.

"Just be patient, my dear sir," cried Sam, slapping in a lot more of the stuff.

Now, if he had remembered where he had placed his box of tooth-powder when he last had it, he would have been better off.

He had stuck it on the right side of the stand.



The box he now held had been taken from the left-hand side of the same.

One box contained the innocuous tooth-powder, the other held a forty horse power salve, hotter and stronger than young love.

The countryman's mouth was pretty well pickled from a long acquaintance with hard cider, plug tobacco, and scalding coffee, but it was not proof against the hot stuff that Sam clapped into it so suavely.

He sputtered, and choked, and gagged, kicked out both feet, and then jumped up, as mad as blazes.

What happened next is good enough to save for another chapter.

### CHAPTER III.

THE rawboned countryman upon whose teeth Sam had been operating did not at all relish having his mouth made the receptacle for all sorts of hot things.

The skin was nearly flayed from the interior of his cranium and he jumped up as mad as he could conveniently hold.

"Gosh darn ye! play tricks on me, will ye?" he yelled.

Then he struck out right and left, determined to smash the whole business.

Over went Jeremiah, with all his other names, backward, and clean off the platform on to the ground.

The stand went one way, the chair another, and young Solomon another.

Poor Moses, that pure mongrel dog was lifted up by one of the big feet appertaining to that late hay-seeder and sent flying over the heads of the crowd.

Peter Focket went tumbling heels over head off the platform, never waiting to go down the steps.

Sam himself got one crack which broke him all up and sent him into the interior of the wagon among a miscellaneous collection of goods of all sorts.

All this was only the first round.

If one spasm would accomplish so much, what wouldn't three or four of them do?

"Gol ram ye, come on, the hull lot of ye!" roared the rustic, standing in the center of the platform and squaring off for a second blow. "Play tricks on me, will ye? Burn the hull meouth off a feller, eh? Jest yew step up here, the hull goldurned lot of ye, an' I'll show ye how I was riz."

Sam sat away back in the wagon, very much done up, Jeremiah John was examining himself to see if there was enough left of him to take to the next camp meeting, Solomon had crawled under the wagon, Moses was yelping like a major, and Peter hadn't found out which end he stood on yet.

There stood that tearing mad countryman, squaring off at the air and looking fierce enough to eat everybody within sight.

"Consarn ye all, jest come on an' let me give ye another sockdologer once, yew pesky critters," he muttered. "I'm right in trainin' neow, and I'd like to warm up a dozen on ye afore supper, jest to git an appetite."

Nobody accepted his kind invitation, but some one invited him to go soak his head.

"I'll soak yourn, ye gol durned shrimp," he yelled, jumping to the ground.

The crowd scattered right and left, but country hauled off and stood in an attitude of defense, ready to lick all creation.

He wouldn't lick Sam while he was down, but he kindly invited him to step up and try another round.

"One dose of that stuff is enough for a lifetime, thank you," said Sam. "Do you carry an electric battery in that fist of yours? It felt like it."

"Yew dog-gone pup, if yu'll step eout here on the ground, I'll show ye what I carry in it."

"Not this evening, s'mother evening," warbled Sam. "This establishment is closed for repairs."

The countryman, seeing that he could get no one to fight with him, now took himself off, and the crowd dispersed.

Sam shut up shop for the evening, put away his horses and wagon, and retired to the hotel to chat with Peter.

"That countryman had a fist like a sledge hammer," remarked our hero. "I didn't know I'd given him the wrong stuff till afterward. I wouldn't have done it for a good deal."

"Guess we might as well shake this town in the morning," said Peter.

"Bet your boots," observed Sam. "We've done first rate, that's one comfort."

Accordingly, the next morning, directly after breakfast, the whole establishment of Smart & Co. left the Corners and sought a new field for their labors.

The golden eagle on top shone in the sun, the portraits of Georgey Wash on the side panels smiled at the crowds, the partners waved their handkerchiefs, Jeremiah John tooted away on his trumpet for dear life, and Solomon made faces at the crowd, while Moses snapped at the heels of the grangers before finally bidding them adieu.

They entered the town of Black's Hollow, fifteen miles away, an hour or so before noon, and took it by storm.

Reining up in front of the post office, where a crowd had already collected, waiting for the mail, Sam stood up, tipped his hat, and said:

"No, this is not a circus, or the advance guard of the Salvation Army, but the firm of Smart & Co., peddlers, dealers in general articles, fancy goods, notions, and other things, to be mentioned later on."

"I am Smart myself, the young gentleman at my side is the Co.; the African prince in the rear is our factotum, and the colored prodigy behind is the funniest moke in existence."

"Come and see our free show this evening, bring your best girls, and rivet on your vest buttons—also,

don't forget your pocket-books, for after the show our grand sale will take place."

"If you want spoons, knives, forks, watches, wooden ware, toilet soap, towels, or perfumery, this wagon is the best place in the world to buy 'em, for you'll get your money's worth at our show, and don't you forget it!"

"Our dress goods will wash, and so will our soap; you won't get stuck on our pins, though they are stickers, and so are our glues and cements for mending anything that's broken, except a bank: our shoes will last and never peg out; our sash ribbons will blind you, and our patent yeast cakes take as well as make the cake, so make a break, be wide awake and don't give us the shake."

"That feller talks by steam," muttered a sober citizen in a white hat and black clothes. "Guess he's got that speech by heart."

"Yes, sir, and a hundred others," cried Sam. "Fact is, you can call me a regular talking kaleidoscope, always changing and always presenting something new. I chew tobacco in sixteen different languages, and quote from all the poets, ranging from Milton to the man who writes the machine verses for a patent tooth wash. Let me give you a sample:

"There was a young man from Milwaukee  
Who was awfully stupid and gawky,  
Till he had the good taste  
To use Sam Smart's tooth paste,  
Which made his grinders look chalky."

"That's only a sample, will give more of the same sort this evening. Drive on, Peter; Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham, tool your horn; Solomon, see that our circulars get into every box in the post-office. Don't forget to inclose dollar bills in 'em all, will you? Get up!"

Down the street rattled the giddy equipage, the women looking out of the windows, the small boys chasing after it, and the clerks in the stores wishing they had just such a rig to take their Sunday girls out with.

Sam put up his horses, his mule, his wagon and himself at the hotel, and then took a rest till dinner-time, Peter being meanwhile occupied in sowing the town a foot deep with announcements of the sale that evening.

Along in the afternoon Sam, having occasion to want the big coon, went around to the stable and began to look for him.

He found Solomon, but no Jeremiah John could be seen.

"Where's your father, Sol?"

"Dunno, boss," returned the little coon, with his grin turned on at full head.

"When did you see him last?"

"Bout an houah ago, boss; jess aftah dinnah, I reckon."

"What was he doing?"

"Gwine down to de pos' ofis, I reckon, kase him head war turned dat way."

"What would take him to the post office? Was he looking for letters?"

"Dunno, boss. Spec's he wanted ter see wha' war gwine on."

"He didn't say where he was going?"

"No, sah. Spec he thought it war none o' my biz."

"Very likely," muttered Sam, as he walked away.

At the post office he found a miscellaneous collection of men, women and boys, of all ages, sizes and colors, hanging around waiting for the mail to be sorted.

In fact, waiting for the mail seemed to be the principal occupation of the people of Black's Hollow, and although there might not be more than twenty letters to sort, it took some time to do it, and the gang wouldn't budge till all had been taken away.

As Sam stepped up he noticed three or four darkies standing together talking, and he looked around for Jeremiah.

"Am yo' gwine ober to de camp dis aftahnoon, 'Rastus'?" asked one of the coons, a coffee-colored moke in an old pair of overalls, a blue shirt, big straw hat and cowhide boots.

"No, sah, I kean't spar' de time, Jeema. De boss am so tickler dat I get dat piece o' mowin' done."

"Dere's a gret outpo'in' ob de sperrit at dese meetin's, I tol' yo' 'Rastus, an' yo'd orter fink 'nuff ob yo' salvation to 'ten' dem."

"Camp meeting in town, eh boys?" asked Sam, stepping up.

His suspicions had been aroused and he was on the lookout for the full particulars.

"Yas'r, dey is an' a big un, all de bredren fo' miles aroun' is dere."

"Wanter go ober, boss? I takes yo' dere fo' fifty cents."

"Don' yo' go wif dat coon, boss. I totes yo' dere fo' fo'ty cents, dere and back too."

"Colored camp-meeting, is it?"

"Yas'r, reg'lar African Methodist meetin' undah de Greckshun ob de persidin' eldah."

"How far 's it?"

"Bout a mile."

"Tain't elder, boss, it's fo' miles."

"Dem niggers is foolin' yo', cunnel—it am only half a mile. Yo' kin walk 's easy 's nuffin'."

"No, yo' kan't, boss; it am all up hill, bese ways."

"Betiah take a calage, boss. Take yer dar cheap."

"If I go I'll take my own horse," remarked Sam.

"Oh!" muttered all the coons.

"How far is it, now?" asked Sam, with a wink.

"Jes' 'bout a mile, boss, right on de oder side ob de river, ober a bridge, in de woods."

Pretty soon a big four seated wagon, crowded with coons, drove up, and most of the darkies standing around got on board.

"Dis way to de cam'-meetin'!" shouted the driver,

a big darky, as black as ink. "Gwine right off dis minnit. Take yo' all dere fo' ten cents a head."

Having increased his load by half a dozen, the coon driver started off, and Sam followed in his wake.

A walk of about fifteen minutes through a pleasant country brought him to the camp grounds.

This was a pretty little pine grove, whose aromatic odors were delightful to the senses, and on the edge of which ran a noisy river, spanned by a rustic bridge.

There were openings here and there in the grove, and in one of these was a stand and a lot of rough benches on which sat the faithful.

Old white wool aunties, antiquated uncles with goggles, duce coons looking like escaped rainbows, sprightly wenches gotten up regardless, and no end of boys, girls and babies, sat on the hard benches and listened to the flow of eloquence from the primitive pulpit.

Here and there, through the wood, strolled amorous mokes, casting sheep's eyes on one another, while orawny hands were passed around eighteen-inch waists, love looks shone in their optics.

Here and there, too, mischievous youngsters of all shades from cream to chocolate, and from black to pearl brown, cut up all sorts of antics, and called down the wrath of the deacons, who now and then chased them away with stout sticks.

Sam stood at the end of the collection of benches, looking over the congregation when the preacher, who was getting a bit winded, belched forth:

"Bredren an' sinners, sisters an' all han's, I wish to interdooce to yo' notis de gret ewangelis', Brud-der Sniff, who will tell yo' all 'bout yo' sins."

Then, to Sam's not very great astonishment, up, popped Jeremiah John Joseph, and jumped right into his discourse.

"Bredren, an' sistahs," he shouted, "am yo' awar' whar yo'm gwine? Yo'm all goin' stret to de lan' ob brimstun an' 'lah ef yo' don't 'pent ob yo' sins."

"Ab, I tol' yo', bredren, dat lan' smnt a pleasant lan' to lib in fo' anybody. Dere an' no milk an' honey dere, I tol' yo'—not eben skim milk an' 'lasses, bredren."

"Dat lan' am a dref'l lan', an' smells jes' like yo' set of a hull box ob loose-flah matches all to once, right undah yo' noses—dat's what it am, an' yo'm all steerin' stret fo' dat lan', 'less yo' 'pent ob yo' sins, I tol' yo', an' jine de gospel p'cession marchin' to de regiums ob glory."

"Oh, bredren, does yo' wanter sit foreber holdin' yo' noses to keep out de brimstun, or does yo' wanter sit down in de boofu' medders, sniffin' de new-mown hay an' smellin' de sweet flowahr ob bressedness—hay?"

And Jeremiah John shouted out this last word, and brought his big fist down on the little desk with such a thump that the supports gave way.

Over went the excited speaker right on top of the first row where sat the anxious.

They were indeed anxious when they saw that big coon coming toward them, and the way they scrambled up was a caution.

Some of them were not sudden enough, and one lank specimen of coon was fairly pinned to the bench as Jeremiah came flying off the stand, reading desk and all.

What a yelling and howling and shrieking there was!

The thin darky thought he was dead, while his wife—a fat sister weighing nearly as much as Jeremiah—began pounding that astonished moke over the back with her umbrella.

That didn't fetch him up, for he was all out of breath, but something else did.

It was Sam suddenly shouting out in stentorian tones:

"Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac Moses Glory Hallelujah Smith, come here this minuter!"

"Yas'r, heah I is," cried Jeremiah, jumping to his feet in an instant.

Then Sam ran down the aisle between the two sections of benches, grabbed Jeremiah by the ear, big as he was, gave him a kick behind and said:

"Get out of here, you lazy coon, and go to work."

"Yas'r," muttered Jeremiah, marching off as quiet as a lamb, while all the brethren wondered.

If he had wanted to fall upon his boss, that big coon could have made Sam feel as flat as a flounder; but he was meekness itself.

"How dar' ye disturb de meetin', yo' common white trash!" cried the presiding elder, jumping to his feet.

"Rats!" cried Sam, giving Jeremiah John another kick.

It had no more effect, physically, than if Sam had kicked an air cushion, but its moral outcome was immense.

To be kicked before a whole congregation was humiliating beyond expression, and Jeremiah felt his disgrace keenly.

"Ain't you ashamed to go loafing off like this?" cried Sam. "If I hadn't caught you, you wouldn't have shown up till midnight, and then come home tight, I suppose. Get out of here, you lazy, good-for-nothing coon."

Then Sam gave him another kick, which hurt only his inner feelings, and had no effect whatever on his corporal senses.

Sam was nearly laughing at the crestfallen look of the big coon, but he held in till he got out of the camp.

He knew well enough that if he hadn't hauled the darky out of camp he would have remained there all day and night, and perhaps the next day as well.

There was no use in having a fellow you couldn't depend on, and Jeremiah was just that sort when there was a camp-meeting going on.



He said nothing till they had crossed the bridge, when he remarked:

"Wha' fo' yo' make all dat fuss, boss? Don' yo' s'pose I come quietly, jes' as well as t'oder way?"

"No," said Sam, "you wouldn't."

"Wha's de ha'm in goin' to meetin', boss?"

"None if you came home again, but you wouldn't. You're the laziest nigger I ever saw, and I don't want you any more. You're discharged!"

"Yo' gib me de shake, boss?"

"Yes, you're discharged. I don't want you any more. Peter, will give you your money. You cango back to the camp meeting if you like."

Then Sam coolly lighted a cigar and strolled on as carelessly as though that coon were not within a thousand miles.

Go back to the camp after being hauled by the ear and kicked out of it?

Not for Jeremiah John Joseph!

next two days," returned Peter, grinning. "What was it this time, Sam?"

"Too much camp-meeting. However, I nabbed him in time, or we would have had to do without him to-night."

When Jeremiah returned, Peter was sitting alone on the piazza, and beckoning to him, said:

"I hear you are dismissed, Jeremiah?"

"Yas'r, de boss fiah me out, jes' fo' nuffin' 'tall."

"That does not concern me," said Peter. "All I know is that you are discharged. How much do we owe you?"

All this was said with an air of severity that completely deluded the poor coon.

"Donno, Marse Pete, guess I hab to lebe dat to yo'."

"Well, here's a dollar, I guess that's about right," and Peter passed over the case which Jeremiah took and gazed at in a most lugubrious fashion.

"Am dat all, Marse Petey?"

Thank you, sir. Here are the spoons, genuine Nevada mine silver spoons, made expressly for Smart & Co., every spoon stamped with our initials. Who'll have the next lot? Any more, Peter? You, m'am? Thank you, ma'm. You won't find a better spoon than that from here to California. If you do I'll buy it."

The pop-corn went popping, for everybody wanted a lot of spoons, and wanted to be the twentieth buyer.

"All gone!" yelled Sam, as he tossed the last lot of corn at a big colored woman who now strode up to the wagon.

"Whar's my spoons?" she cried.

"Sorry, ma'am, but that's only the ninety-ninth package of corn, and it's the hundredth that takes the spoons."

"Den gimme dat, too," and the darky woman shoved up another nickel.



"Pretty good teeth," he remarked—"fine and regular—no crockery there—good, natural teeth—strong enough to chew railroad restaurant sandwiches, but terribly dirty." Then he took a good-sized pinch of the powder in the box, and began rubbing the granger's teeth with it.

He would no more go near that camp or any of the Black's Hollow coons after that than he would jump into the pond with lead in his shoes.

Sam knew that and that was why he had acted thusly.

As for the discharge, that also acted as an inducement to keep the coon away from the meeting.

Sam had had him perhaps a month, and in that time he had already discharged him a dozen times.

It was the only way to keep him up to time, for the simple coon honestly believed, every time, that his dismissal was positive and peremptory.

He followed Sam at a distance, looking more owl-like than ever, and wearing a look of deep dejection.

"Dat am alls de way," he remarked to himself. "When a fellah try to do him duty an' go 'cordin' to right, den he lose him job an' gets kicked down in de dust! I see 'scharged, I is, an' nobody car's nuffin' fo' me. I see a po' orphan, wif a healfy young imp ob a son to lock artah an' suppo't an' nuffin' to do it on. Spec's we bofe hab to go to de po' house, all 'count ob dat hahd-hearted boss ob mine."

Sara knew well enough that the coon was following, and he never once looked back, but skipped along as merry as a lark, now and then sending out airy puffs of white smoke, which floated away lazily over his head.

He reached the hotel a long way in advance of the smoke, and finding Peter on the hotel piazza, said:

"Jeremiah has been discharged. You can give him a dollar."

"You'll see as straight a coon as ever was for the

"That's all."

"Conldn' yo' gib me suffin' for Solomon?"

"No, he's thrown in."

"An' I see frown out," muttered Jeremiah John, sadly, as he walked away.

The moment he was out of hearing Peter laughed, ready to split.

"That coon takes the bakery!" he remarked. "I don't know what we'd do without him."

Just before dark Peter found him sitting on a bench out in the barn, and said to him:

"I'll want you to-night, Jeremiah John, don't forget it, and I'll let you know to-morrow whether you're to stay or not."

"A right, Marse Peter," said the coon glumly. "Reckon I kin stav a lilly while."

That evening Sam collared the crowd by his singing. Peter's dog circus and the singing and playing of the two coons, there being a regular jam in front of the big wagon.

"Now, then, ladies and gentlemen," he shouted. "I'll start off this sale with some of our extra-fine, sugar-coated, sweet-scented pop-corn, that makes your hair curl, brings out a mustache in four days, covers the baldest head with glossy curls in six applications, gives you free admission to all the circuses, and insures your life. A dozen silver spoons given away with every twentieth package. Here you are, now only a nickel, half a dime, or five cents. Who's the first lucky man to get the spoons? Who's the first Butler in the crowd?"

"Pass 'em right out, Peter, and be sure you don't take any lead nickels. Remember, gent's, the twentieth man gets a dozen spoons. You, sir? Yes, sir."

"Sorry, ma'am, but we had only ninety-nine. Fetch up the next article, Peter. Soap, I believe?"

"Yo' can't soap me!" cried that angry wench. "I wan' dem spoons, an' I see boun' to hab 'em."

Then she jumped upon that platform, caught sight of Jeremiah John and yelled:

"Fo' de lan' sakes, ef dar ain' my long-los' husban', sho's yo' bo'n!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

THE announcement that Jeremiah John was her husband, made by that big female coon, caused a momentary consternation in the camp of Smart & Co.

"Come right heah, yo' fassy niggah!" cried the woman, laying hands on Jeremiah. "Wha' fo' yo' run away fom me an' leabe me to do all de wo'k? I show you, niggah!"

Then she fetched one of her big hands, looking more like a ham than anything else, across the coon's ear.

"Don' yo' tell me yo' isn't my man," she cried, boxing the other ear and making Jeremiah wince. "I jes' take dat nonsense out'n yo' when I gits yo' home, see ef I don', yo' good-fo'-nuffin', no 'count coon!"

Then she banged Jeremiah over the nose, thumped him on the back, and there was no knowing where she would have stopped had not young Solomon interfered.

"Yo' le' my fader alone, yo' ol' niggah woman," he cried, rushing up and taking the wench a kick on the shins.

There was good leather in his boots, and that mis-



guided colored female gave a yell and sat down so sudden that she made the platform creak.

The crowd thought this was all a part of the show and laughed, yelled and giggled.

Jeremiah John got away, but as the wench was scrambling to her feet Moses, the trick dog, came flying at her, barking like mad.

"Yo' hit my fader agin, ef yo' tink bes'!" growled Solomon. "Sick 'em, Mose; tear de shoestrings off'n de ol' woman."

"Whar am dat husban' ob mine?" cried sweet Susannah or whatever else her name was. "I jes' wipe de fio' wif him ef I cotch him."

"The man is not your husband, madame," said Sam. "and I'll be obliged if you'd skip out of here."

"Skip! me skip! Yo' donno who's yo's talkin' to. I'se a membah ob de chu'ch I is, an' I'se too dig-nified to do any skippin', I tol' yo'."

"Why does the president wear red, white, and blue suspenders? To keep his trousers up. Why do people buy these plasters? Because they're the best in the market. You won't get stuck on 'em, though they're as good stickers as tar and feathers."

Meanwhile, the angry colored woman had disappeared in search of her recreant husband, and Sam held the crowd by his rattling talk, getting off jokes, puns, and conundrums by the yard.

The plasters were only meant as a stop gap for, while Sam was discoursing on their merits and selling a few, Peter was unpacking a lot of boxes and putting them on the stand.

"Here we have some of the celebrated cough mixture, used by the late Emperor of Russia," declared Sam, holding up a small bottle. "It yanked him away from death's door on several occasions, and if he had had time to get his bottle when the Nihilists blew him up with dynamite, he would have been alive yet."

"Can you ever get rich if you spend every cent?"

I guess not.

Can you keep an umbrella when it is Lent?

I guess not.

Can you marry two girls and have any peace?

Can you make first class butter from old axle-grease?

Will the number of old maids ever decrease?

I guess not.

"Does a man enjoy life when he's poor as a shad?"

I guess not.

Do ministers' sons never go to the bad?

I guess not.

Do whales grow on trees? Do pigs live in the sea?

Does seven times seven make forty-three?

Or were two of a trade ever known to agree?

I guess not."



"Yew dog-gone pup, if yu'll step eout here on the ground I'll show ye what I carry in it." "Not this evening, s'mother evening," warbled Sam. "This establishment is closed for repairs."

Then the crowd laughed some more, and that made Mrs. Coon mad.

"Who's yo' laffin' at?" she cried, getting down from the platform. "Reckin' I'se a lady much as de nex' one, an' I won' 'taud no sass."

At this she proceeded to sail into the crowd right and left, and those she hit were glad enough to get out of the way.

Sam grabbed up a cornet, tooted a tremendous blast on it, and then shouted as loud as he could yell, and he had lots of voice:

"The entertainment will now conclude with one grand, international, reciprocal, no duty sale of porous plasters. If your friend asks you where you've been for a week back, tell him: you've been to me for a plaster; that'll cure a week back if you've had it a month back.

"Step up and examine our plasters, and you'll never buy any others. Don't think because they have holes in 'em that they're moth eaten, for they ain't, that's the porosity of 'em. Twenty-five cents for a plaster, and a pocket dictionary given away with one, which alone costs ten cents.

"Never mind that colored woman. We employ no 'raveling agents and do no advertising. She belongs to a rival establishment, but this is the shop where you get your money's worth.

"These porous-plasters will cure stiff necks, lame backs, saddle-backs or any other kind of aches, pains or cramps. Buy one and you'll never use anything else. You couldn't spend a quarter better. If you bought beer it would soon be gone, but these plasters tick to you.

"How often do you hear the sad refrain, 'Twas a cough that carried him off—'twas a coffin they carried him off in?' This cough mixture prevents and cures the worst case of cough you ever saw. One dose and the cough is all broken up. They even use it to break up town meetings down our way when they get too long-winded. Ten cents a bottle, with the map of the world printed on each wrapper.

"Buy a bottle, break up your cold, and study geography all at the same time. Best little investment you ever made. While my partner is taking in the dimes I will proceed to warble."

Just then, however, Jeremiah John came sneaking up to the wagon and said:

"Am de wench gone away, boss?"

"No; she's under the wagon. Look out for yourself!" cried Sam.

That was enough for Jeremiah, and he dusted out of that locality in a hurry.

"Now, then, fellow sufferers," said Sam, "I will proceed to warble, as I said previously," and forthwith he relieved his feelings in the following ditty:

"Can a silk purse be made of the ear of a pig?"

I guess not.

Do mice turn to rats as soon as they're big?

I guess not.

Can you make a small boy prefer work to play?

Can you live like a lord on ten cents a day?

Can you make a blind horse eat shavings for hay?

I guess not.

The crowd got regularly wild over this song, and yelled till they were hoarse.

"Give us some more!" they howled.

"I guess not," said Sam.

Then he began selling his bottles of cough mixture, giving away a bottle every now and then and returning the money, so as to stimulate others to buy.

Those cough mixture bottles went like honey on corn dodgers, and the whole lot was disposed of in ten minutes.

Sam had got the crowd into good humor, and he sold everything he put up.

Pancake turners, shaving mugs, egg beaters, shoe strings, scarf pins, dried herrings and prepared coffee went like lightning, in fact, it made no difference how incongruous were the different articles offered, they went all the same.

Finally the crowd began to thin out, for it was growing late, and Sam asked Peter to play "Home, Sweet Home" on the jaw's-harp while he packed up.

Jeremiah John Joseph came around as the boys were putting the lights out, followed by Solomon, who had gone off with him on his second lighting out.

"Where's your wife, Jeremiah?" asked Sam.

"She ain' my wife 'tall, boss. Neber seen her afo' dis ebenin'."

"Didn't you meet her at the camp meeting?" asked Peter.

"Spec's mebbe I did, but I disremember, Marse Peter."

"Ain't she your mother, Solomon?" asked Sam.

"No, sah. Me moder am anoder woman altoget-



der. Neber see dat wench alo'. Reckon she's looney."

Solomon proved to have come to the right conclusion, for when Sam and Peter went into the office of the hotel, after putting things to rights, they found out all about her.

She was a half crazy coon, whose husband had run away from her years before on account of her bad temper, and she fancied that every strange darky she met was her truant husband.

She had seen Jeremiah at the camp meeting, and had followed him up, collaring on to him, as already mentioned, as he sat on the big wagon.

The next day, during the morning, Jeremiah was missed again, and Solomon gave it as his opinion that his father had taken in the negro camp meeting again.

"I won't have any more fooling with that moke,"

"Dey's some money comin' to me, isn't dey, boss?"

"Not a red! You've been overpaid, if anything."

"Jes' glad 'ob it," snorted Jeremiah. "Ef yo' hadn't said it fus' I war jes' gwine to 'scharge yo' m' ownself. Yo's no good, an' I wouldn' wo'k fo' yo' ef yo' gib me fi' doliah a day."

"Oh, you wouldn't?" said Sam, not a little surprised.

"No, sah. I'se jes' glad I'se gwine away. I'se sick 'ob de hull business. No cam' meetin', no pra's, no lub feas', no nuthin', only wo'k all de time."

"Well, we're both satisfied then," said Sam, with a laugh.

"Yas'r, we'se bofe sass'led, on'y I'se sass'led de mos'. I'se gwine home, an' yo' kin go on wif yo' ol' wagon fo' all, o' me. Specs like 'nuff yo' sen' Solomon home, too, but I don't car ef yo' do. Yo'm jes' mean 'nuff."

"Nor as independent," laughed Peter.

"Wasn't he, though?" returned Sam. "If he had owned half the earth and had a mortgage ready to foreclose on the other half, he couldn't have been more uppish."

"Or maybe he was afraid that that big wench would get hold of him and run him off in spite of himself."

"Perhaps so."

"If there are any camp-meetings on our route we'll be sure to run across him. I believe if he knew there was a camp-meeting forty miles off he'd go to it if he had to walk."

"That's the power of the spirit that outpours at these meetings," remarked Sam, with a chuckle. "My experience of these affairs has always been, however, that there is as much a pouring down of spirits as there is a pouring out."

"Of course. If you pour it out you might as well



"Wish I'd stayed wif Sam Smart now; cussed big fool I didn', dat's wha' I is. Wish we'd hab a showah."

"All right," thought Sam. "If that's what you want I'll accommodate you."

said Sam, very decidedly. "This time he's got to go."

"Am yo' gwine to gub him de gran' bounce, boss?" asked Solomon.

"Yes, I am. I'm not going to keep yanking him out of camp meetings. It takes all my time."

"Am yo' gwine to fiah me too, boss?"

"No, you can stay, but I won't have that lazy coon any longer. Jeremiah was gone all the morning, but showed up promptly at dinner-time, looking as innocent as a billy goat chewing a circus poster."

"Oh, you've got back, have you?" asked Sam, angrily.

"Yas'r, I'se back."

"Where have you been?"

"Down to cam' meet'n', boss."

"Didn't I tell you not to go there?"

"Reckon yo' did, boss."

"And you went, for all that?"

"Ain't a gwine to tell a lie 'bout it, boss."

"Then you don't care what I say?"

"Reckon yo' kean't keep me 'way fom de meet'n' by sayin' I shan't, boss."

"All right, then, that settles it. You're bounced."

"Yo' fiah me out, boss?"

"Yes, sir, you're fired out, so get, and don't show your ebony mug around here again."

"Kean't go till aftah dinnah, boss," said that coon, coolly.

"You can't get any dinner on me. I've paid for all I'm going to."

Jeremiah John was on his ear and just wanted to show Sam that he was entirely independent of the latter and was glad enough to shake him.

He got his dinner, all the same, and then disappeared in the direction of the camp ground and did not show up all day.

Sam remained in Black's Hollow that night and did a roaring business, dropping small articles and selling big ones, so as to show the people that his firm was no Cheap John affair, and that he could carry as expensive a lot of goods as any one.

Sam and Peter both got off lots of songs and jokes. Solomon made a funny stump speech, Moses did some new tricks, and Sam played on all sorts of instruments.

The young peddlers just had that crowd of countrymen solid, and the evening's sale netted them a tidy little sum.

"The sun is still shining, Peter, my boy," said Sam, as they sat smoking before turning in, "and we'd better make as much hay as possible."

"Do you think this town will stand us another night?" asked Peter.

"It's stood a week of nigger minstrels, they tell me, and still lives, and I guess we can fetch 'em again."

The darky camp-meeting broke up that night, but Jeremiah did not return, and in the morning he was still missing.

"Guess he must have really started for home," said Peter. "I half expected that he would come and beg me to ask you to take him back."

"Yes, he's gone for sure this time, I guess," said Sam. "He's never been away so long before."

pour it down," replied Peter. "You wouldn't want to throw it away, I suppose?"

That morning Sam and Peter rehearsed a new and very nobby song and dance, which they contemplated inflicting upon the crowd that evening, and then Sam hunted through a lot of songs to find one that would take the popular taste, for these countrymen wanted new things or nothing.

In the afternoon Sam made a trade in horses and showed himself up to snuff, while Peter bought a lot of cheap cigars so as to be up in tobacco.

When the shades of night were beginning to show themselves, the big wagon was driven out, and the gasoline lamps threw their oily brilliancy over the scene.

Jeremiah John was absent, and so Peter banged away on the big drum, for he was a natural drummer by reason of his business, and Sam coaxed sweet sounds out of the corset to tickle the ears of the crowd.

The countrymen seemed to need a good deal of persuasion this night, for it was hot and uncomfortable out of doors ever, though the night had fallen, and Sam put on his song and dance with Peter and rattled off half a dozen lively ditties.

Then little Solomon did a contortion act, and Peter put Moses through his exercises, by which time the crowd had increased.

"I'm going to be generous to-night, boys," cried Sam, picking up a box of cigars. "Have a smoke with me."

And he began tossing the cheap cigars that Peter had purchased into the crowd.



"Have a weed, sir," he asked a clerical-looking man who stood near the wagon.

"I never indulge in such a vile habit as smoking," said the other, "and I am astonished that a young man like you should lead people astray."

"Oh, it don't cost you anything," said Sam, as he fired the cigars right and left. "These are only samples, gents, to show you what we can do. I have a few boxes left that I'll sell for fifty cents apiece, twenty-five cigars in each box, matches thrown in. Try 'em and then buy 'em."

"Say, mister," cried a young countryman, who had lighted his cigar and was puffing away vigorously, "where's the corn beef that goes with this cabbage?"

"Can't give you any," said Sam, "but I can tell you where you can get corned pork. Go sit in a barrel of brine and pickle yourself. Catch on? Then hold on and don't bristle up over the swiney joke, shoulder your troubles and save your bacon, or souse 'em into the brook, that's the kind of man I am, my grunter, so root out of here or I'll root a beggar out. Catch on to the ruler bag? Then turn up and lettuce have peas. Who wants some corn salve? Takes the corns right out by the roots. Ten cents a box and a chromo of Andrew Jackson given away free."

Then he and Peter soaked that crowd on corn salve, tooth paste and shoe blacking, and jumped from them to calico aprons, flannel nightcaps and Turkish towels, though the thermometer was getting tired of climbing up into the eighties.

The sale did not last very long, for the people were hot and disgusted, and Sam therefore closed up early and went off to bed.

The next morning Smart & Co. left the town at an early hour, for it promised to be a blazing hot day.

The sun got in his big licks when he first arose, and the air was positively stifling.

The farmers sweated like bullocks as they worked in the fields and sought the shade of the trees, under which lay their water-jugs, quite frequently.

The store-keepers remained within doors, and customers were like the visits of angels—not very many of them, and scattered at that.

Sam had swapped his mule and his old plug, his former polers, for two rattling nags, but on this morning they had no more spirit than a yoke of oxen.

There was no Jeremiah, and so little Solomon sat on the box, the sweat pouring off him, and tried to blow the bugle.

Both Sam and Peter felt as if they were being baked, and still they did not like to urge the horses, for they seemed to suffer more than their masters.

"If any man dares to ask me if this is hot enough for me," said Sam, as he wiped the sweat-pearl from his manly brow with a dripping wipe, "I think I'll be tempted to murder him."

"Or consign him to a hotter place yet," observed Peter.

"I don't believe it exists, my boy, and I'll wager that all the cows we see will be turned in to roast beef before night if this weather keeps up."

"I hope we'll strike a decent town before long, then. Anything is better than this."

Toward noon, when the weather seemed at boiling heat, the horses ascended a little hill and came to a railroad crossing.

At some little distance down the track Sam could see a station and a cluster of houses.

"I've got some freight at that station, if I'm not mistaken," he said, "and I think I'll stop."

He was about to cross the track, when he suddenly reined up his tired steeds.

"What's up?" asked Peter Pocket. "Train coming?"

"No."

"What are you stopping for?"

"Look down the track?"

"Well?"

"Do you see that big water tank on stilts half way between here and the station?"

"Yes."

"Do you see anything else?"

"Oh, yes, I see a man sitting on the braces just under it."

"Who is he?"

"How the dickens do I know? You're as bad as a country girl visiting her city friends. She thinks they know everybody."

"You know that fellow as well as I do. Look again."

"Why, yes, to be sure, it's the big coon."

"Certainly, and here's a chance for a snap. Drive over the track and I'll get down."

Peter took the reins, drove across the track and then stopped while Sam climbed from his high seat to the ground.

Our hero then hurried along the track, keeping out of sight of Jeremiah who sat in the shade of the big round water tank which looked like a huge hog's head set upon legs.

One of the lower braces served him for a seat, and there he sat, sweating like a horse.

Just above his head was the big spout through which water was supplied to the engines on the railroad.

On the other side, reaching nearly to the ground, was the rope which opened the valves above and let on the water.

Stealing cautiously up behind, and making no noise, Sam Smart gazed at the big coon with a comical wink of his eye.

"Whew! it am hot, take my oath!" exclaimed Jeremiah, swabbing his head with a big bandanna handkerchief and puffing like a porpoise.

Sam agreed with him on that point.

"Gorry! what a big fool I was to git mad and start to walk hum?" he presently continued, giving an-

other puff. "Ef I'd stayed wif de boss I could a-rode, an' not go sweatin' my gizzard out a-hoofin' it in dis wedder. Fo' Gawge, I don't b'lieve it's any hottah dan dis down in debil's kitchen. I don't fo' a fac! Serves me right fo' bein' so contrary an' gettin' my back up fo' nuffin'!"

Then he snorted some more, swabbed off his forehead and wrung out his handkerchief.

"Gorramity! wish I'd stayed wif Sam Smart now; cussed big fool I did'n', dat's wha' I is. Wish we'd hab a showah."

"All right," thought Sam. "If that's what you want I'll accommodate you."

## CHAPTER V.

JEREMIAH JOHN, sitting under the spout of the water tank, wished for a shower.

He got it.

Sam was just the boy to gratify the coon's wishes. No sooner said than done.

The words had scarcely left the moke's lips, when Sam yanked on the valve rope.

Swash!

Out came the water in a regular flood.

It caught Jeremiah John and so forth Smith right on top of the head.

Never, since the days of old Noah, did one man get such a ducking.

He was wet all over, from head to foot, in a twinkling.

Down came the water as if the heavens had busted.

Jeremiah gave one gasp, and grabbed for the braces with both hands.

He held on, but so did the water.

If he had let go, he would have gone over backward, and the shower would have stopped.

But he did not.

Consequently the water still came down.

Suck a ducking as he did get!

He was nearly choked, and finally he ducked his head back of the shower.

Ducked too far, lost his grip and went over backward under the tank.

Then the water stopped.

Sam sneaked out of the way in a hurry, and crouched behind some bushes.

Then Jeremiah John got up, drew a long breath and crawled out from under the tank.

There it stood, looking as innocent as possible.

Jeremiah was wringing wet, and the water ran off him in streams.

Sam held in from laughing, although he nearly died for the want of a good guffaw.

That would have spoiled all the fun.

Jeremiah shook himself, drew another long breath and looked at the tank.

"Reckon dat t'ing mus' ha' busted," he muttered. "Gorry! I fought we'd orter hab a showah, but I didn' look fur no sich heaby rain as dat."

Then Jeremiah took off his shoes, poured a gallon of water, more or less, from each, wrung out his coat and vest, and again contemplated the tank.

"It am lucky fo' me it am a hot day, kase I kin get dry in de sun; but I'd jes' like to see de feller dat runs dat ting once, an' ax him to stop dat leakin' de next time."

Sam was afraid to stay any longer, for fear he would burst out laughing, and so he crept away and returned to his wagon.

He told Peter of the racket he had played on Jeremiah, and they both roared.

Then Sam drove on, and in a few minutes came in sight of the road and the tank, and Jeremiah walking disconsolately along the track.

The moment that coon saw the wagon he gave a yell and ran toward it.

"Hi, ho! Hol' on dere, boss. I wants ter go wif yer," he shouted.

Sam drove on till he came to the station, and then stopped.

Jeremiah John came up in a few moments, puffing and blowing, and leaving a wet wake behind him.

"Hol' up, boss, ain' yer gwine to took me 'long wif yo'?" he panted.

"Where've you been?" asked Sam, with a broad grin. "Did you fall into a watering trough?"

"No, boss, it hab been raining."

"Oh, it has, eh?"

"Yas'r, it jes' rain cats an' dogs an' I didn' hab no 'brella. Tol' yo' what, boss, yo' nober seen sech rain."

"When was this?"

"Jes' dis mo'nin', boss."

"Why, we haven't seen any rain."

"Didn' yo', boss?" asked the coon, solemnly.

"No, sir, not a drop."

"Wall, reckon 'o' mus' ha' come de oder way. It rain like de dickens whar I been."

Sam couldn't keep in any longer, but let out a laugh that set Mose to barking and made the horses jump.

"You old sinner!" cried Sam, "I know very well how you got wet. So don't try to lie out of it."

"We've come the same way you have," added Peter, "and we haven't seen a drop of rain."

"Won' yo' lemme go wif yo', boss?" pleaded Jeremiah, dropping the subject like a hot poker.

"I'se sorry I wor sassy."

"You'll 'tend to business?"

"Yas'r."

"And not run off to camp meetings?"

"No, boss."

"All right, then, I'll hire you."

Jeremiah was going to climb right up into his usual seat, but Sam said quickly:

"Hold on, don't you go to getting up there with all those wet togs on. Do you want to ruin the cushions? I'm going to stop at this place, and you can walk."

It was only a few steps to the hotel, and this distance the coon walked, helping the stablemen look after the horses.

All hands had dinner and took a rest, and then Sam got his freight, finding it waiting for him.

That evening it rained very heavily, and so there was no sale nor free show for the crowd.

If he had wanted to the young merchant could have hired a hall and held his sale, rain or no rain, as he often did, but he did not care to do that in so small a place.

"It won't hurt us to wait over one night," he said, "and we'll be all the fresher for it."

The next day was Saturday, and as it was much cooler, and he was going to a town of considerable size, Sam knew he would do a good business.

They started off the first thing in the morning, and after a ride of twelve or fourteen miles, dashed into the town where they were to spend the night.

Jeremiah had on his uniform and looked as proud as a major, as he sat up on his high perch and awakened the echoes for miles around with his trumpet.

The whole equipage attracted plenty of attention, and when Sam drove up in front of the hotel and drew rein, quite a crowd collected.

"Fellow sinners!" he shouted, "behold the simple turnout of Smart & Co., the A Number One first-class, gold medal, highest prize peddlers."

"Come and call on us this evening, right here in the public square, and you'll find that we are square and straight, and up and down honest fellows to deal with."

"First of all we give a show that takes the biscuit, and all for nothing, and then we sell the biggest line of goods at the cheapest rates this side of Boston, New York, or anywhere else."

"Come along and buy the baby a new frock, get your mother-in-law a bonnet, purchase your wife a silk dress, or procure a pair of trousers for your little brother."

"The trousers we sell for boys are the patent reversible, no-wear-out, indestructible kind, fit any boy and give universal satisfaction; can be used as a blacksmith's apron, water tight bucket or sheeting for leaky roofs. Don't have to be half-soled more'n once a year, and will stand sliding down on cellar doors or any other rough usage to which boys' trousers are generally subjected."

"Then there is our patent wire bustle for giving elegance and fine shape to your dresses."

"Can be used for a bird cage, mouse trap, hanging basket, foot ball, or muzzle for a bull dog. Combines durability with elegance, and sold for a mere song."

"It can be used as a cradle, window-screen, umbrella rack, or patent swing, being adapted to any and all these purposes, and made of the finest steel wire."

"All the leading professional beauties go crazy over them, and I've just shipped a big lot to the queens and princesses of Europe, and so have only a few left, which I will sell cheap for cash, with full instructions how to adjust."

"Don't forget the day and date, and be sure to come around. Such an opportunity may never be offered again. If I wasn't selling, I'd be sure to come and buy, for I know what fine bargains you'll get. Don't disremember the free show before the sale."

Then Sam drove into the hotel yard, put up the horses, and went inside with Peter, while Jeremiah and Solomon stayed without.

In the general sitting-room of the hotel, which was used for the office, reading-room, smoking-room and parlor, there was a dude standing against the desk talking to the clerk.

He had one hand behind him, and in this he held a lighted cigar, the small end turned outwards.

"Good chance for a smoke?" said Sam to Peter, nodding toward the dude.

"First class. Where's the coon?"

Just then Solomon came in, looking for Sam.

"Have a smoke, Sol," asked Sam, indicating the dude by a wave of his thumb.

"Tank yo', boss, reckon I would."

Solomon was no fool, hence his name, and he caught on in a jiffy.

He sneaked up behind that dude, got his lips



over that cigar and puffed away like a good fellow, all without disturbing the owner thereof.

The dude was busy talking to the clerk about some affair in which he was interested.

"It'll all end in smoke, me boy," he declared.

Solomon took another pull at the butt.

"Just like that cigar of his," remarked Sam.

"There's more behind it than we know of, though," said the clerk.

"Yes, there's a little coon," observed Sam.

"Aw, wait till you see the end, me boy," continued the dude.

"The end will be gone if that little nig gets many more puffs," whispered Sam to Peter.

"Yes, but you don't know what's behind," put in the clerk.

"No; if he did, that young coon would be kicked out," was Sam's rejoinder.

Just as Solomon was taking another big draw at the dude's cigar, stooping over with his hands on his knees, in came Jeremiah.

He saw Solomon stooping over, and he smelled smoke, and came to the conclusion that his young son was smoking on the sly.

He didn't notice the dude, but he did notice Solomon—in a way that juvenile coon did not approve.

He raised one big foot and gave his son and heir a whack with it on the cellar door of his breeches.

Solomon shot forward, struck the dude amidships, and jabbed him up against the desk in a twinkling.

Solomon's high dicer fell off, the lighted cigar dropped in it, and the dude bumped heads with the clerk.

That made the clerk mad, and he took the dude in the mouth with his fist.

Backwards went the dude, clean over Solomon, who was stooping to pick up his hat.

Dude sprawled out on the floor just as Jeremiah was about to rush in and give Solomon one for his nob.

Jeremiah's big foot flew through the air, hit nothing, and swung the big coon around like a top.

He lost his balance and sat down on the dude's wish-bone with more superabundance of weight than dexterity.

Solomon recovered his dicer, collared the butt, and laughed till his buttons began to fly off.

The dude grunted, the clerk rang the bell for dinner, and Sam and Peter just stood back and howled.

The whole thing, from Jeremiah's entrance till now, hadn't lasted half a minute.

It was as funny as a circus.

This wasn't all, however.

The big bell that the clerk rang, in his confusion sounded the call for dinner.

Down came the boarders in a tearing hurry, as though their lives depended upon it.

Some of them, the male portion, ran into the office, intending to take a short cut, through that region, to the dining room.

The dude, kicking and splurging, had just succeeded in making Jeremiah understand that his stomach was not the proper resting-place for the latter.

Jeremiah had arisen when the stampede occurred.

In rushed the male boarders and one of them, heavier than Jeremiah by a good fifty pounds, ran slap into him.

Down went that coon again, sitting in the middle of a big stone spittoon.

The latter stood it, but Jeremiah thought his back was broken.

Just then, the boss of the ranch, hearing all the racket, came in through the dining room to know what it meant.

He was nearly upset, but he managed to brace up, and asked:

"What in time is all this row about?"

"Dinner's ready," shouted the boarders.

"It ain't, and won't be for an hour."

"Well, the bell rang."

"Can't help it if it did. Simpkins, what made you ring the bell?"

"I didn't," said Simpkins, getting frightened.

"It fell down."

"Well, dinner isn't ready," said the boss, "so you'll have to wait."

Then he had to go back and clear the women out of the dining-room, for a dozen had already taken seats, and were all clamoring to be waited on.

"Dinner isn't ready, ladies," he said. "The bell was rung by mistake."

"H'm! You're always making mistakes," sniffed one old dame. "Sometimes it's rung too late, and now it's too soon. I'm here now, and I'm going to wait. If I don't, I won't get anything to eat."

"You'll have to wait over an hour, ma'am," said the boss, mildly.

"Well, that ain't much more'n I have to wait sometimes, and I guess I don't mind that if I'm sure of getting something."

The boss went away muttering to himself, and pretty soon a lot of waiter girls came rushing through the place yelling:

"Oh, the circus! let's see the circus go by."

"H'm! guess I can see the circus as well as any one," cried the old dame, as she jumped up and ran out.

The circus was merely an invention of the enemy, and as soon as the old woman got out the door was locked.

In the meantime things had settled down out in the office.

Solomon had recovered his hat and the dude's butt, and putting one on his head and the other in his mouth had sloped, and was now enjoying a quiet smoke out by the barn.

The dude had gone away, and the clerk now sat behind his desk totally oblivious to everything.

"That was a dandy little racket, and all about a cigar," observed Sam to Peter.

"Ef I catch dat boy o' mine smokin' agin, I tan his skin fo' him," growled Jeremiah John. "He'm a membah ob de chu'ch, an' I won' stan' no sich doin's."

Then he went away to find Solomon, and things regained their normal tranquillity.

"This must be a dandy house," observed Sam to Peter, on the quiet, as the two sat on the front piazza smoking, after they had registered, "if the ringing of the dinner bell creates such a panic."

"Yes, and that's a lesson for us. We don't want to lose any time ourselves."

"We won't, my boy."

And they did not, either, for as soon as the bell began to jingle they were in the dining-room.

Sam slapped a silver dollar down by his plate and announced that that was for the smartest waiter girl in the hotel.

The result was that both he and Peter were waited on to the queen's liking, and the other boarders had to whistle until Smart & Co. were served.

That evening the big wagon, the horses, the lights, and Jeremiah John's cornet brought the crowd, and Sam rattled away like a good fellow to keep them amused.

"Now then, my fellow sufferers," he shouted, "you will hear something truly up-and-up, when the infant prodigy, the funny coon, Master Solomon warbles. Solomon, give the boys something hilarious."

Jeremiah wouldn't sing Jubilee songs for such a crowd on any account, though he could shout loud enough at a camp meeting, but Solomon had no such compunctions.

He thumped away on his banjo for a few minutes, and then got rid of the following, the boys coming in heavy on the refrain.

"Oh, chillen, what yo' gwine to do,  
Swingin' on de golden gate,  
When de debil comes a-lookin' fo' yo'  
Swingin' on de golden gate.  
Den hurry up, chillen, froo de do',  
Swingin' on de golden gate.  
An' soon yo'll reach de oder sho',  
Swingin' on de golden gate."

"That's a good one!" cried Sam. "Now for the chorus—all together!"

"We're swingin' on de golden gate,  
Yas, swingin' on de golden gate;  
We don't ear a cent fo' Ol' Nick no mo',  
Kase we're swingin' on de golden gate."

The crowd was mightily tickled at this, and then Solomon let her go for the second verse:

"Oh, Peter, go tell de glor'ous news,  
Swingin' on de golden gate.  
Dat we're all gwine to wear de golden shoes,  
Swingin' on de golden gate,  
So if yo' get dar befo' I do,  
Swingin' on de golden gate,  
Yo' kin bet vo' life I'll get dar too,  
Swingin' on de golden gate."

"Now for the chorus, all hands," cried Sam, and the whole crowd joined in and whooped her up in fine style.

Young Solomon had to sing ten or a dozen more verses, the crowd yelling the refrain and the chorus and making Rome howl thereby.

By this time Sam had sized up the audience, and now he sprang a lot of cheap stuff on them and sold it off like lightning.

"Here we have the boss grease eradicator," he shouted, holding up a box. "Krocks the spots out of everything. Tried it on a coach dog yesterday, one of those white dogs with black spots, containing twenty cakes and all for the very laughable sum of ten cents a box."

"Did it take the spots out of him?" asked Peter.

"No, but it knocked spots out of the fleas. The boarders. Don't the sun rise in the yeast? If you want to rise early eat a yeast cake before going to stains of all kinds, iron rust, or plain every day dirt. Come up here, my son, you have a grease cake in your pocket-book. That's the value of spot on your jacket, been laying up lunches for yeast."

future reference on your coat, I suppose. Come up here, and see me clean it, all for nix."

Thus invited, a frowzy headed youngster with more grease than cloth on his coat, climbed upon the platform and Sam got to work.

"Here we have this little box, you see, and a bit of clean rag, anything will do as long as it's clean. A dollar bill, for instance, though it's hard to find clean ones these days."

"You rub your rag on the paste, so fashion. You lubricate the spot thus wise, you raise a lather, as you see. You sponge it off with a little water, lots of that handy, I suppose, and the spot is gone."

"Clean your own clothes and make 'em last longer; if your trousers are too short, this will make 'em last longer, see? Takes out any spots and makes 'em good as new, not the spots, but the clothes. Tried it on a striped cat this afternoon. When I'd finished, her own kittens didn't know her."

"Ten cents a box for this dirt destroyer, three for fifty cents. So you see you actually save money by buying a box. If a fellow spots you doing anything wrong, this will knock the spots out of him. Full directions and a pack of cards given with each box."

"Will it knock the spots out of a hand of four aces?" asked Peter.

"No, but four knives and a revolver will. Who has the next box? You, sir? Thank you, sir. That's all, my son. You can fall off the platform now. That coat of yours is too big a contract; can't take all those spots off. If I did, the coat wouldn't hold together. The soil there is all that gives it ground to stand on. Do you want the earth?"

"Ain't yo' goin' to give me nuthin' for cleanin' my jacket?" asked the boy.

"Well, my son, such cheek deserves a medal, of leather, and here's the leather, sole leather, the sole kind I possess. Now git!"

The boy got, under the inducement of the sole of Sam's boot, planted against his nether extremities.

"Say, Cheeky, do you know who you're kickin'?" cried the youth, as he struck the ground.

"My pop is the sewer contractor of this place."

"He must have found you in one, then," returned Sam.

"If I cleaned your jacket for you he'd think you didn't belong to him. Who wants the next box? Only ten cents for this household treasure. It's worth getting married and keeping house so that you can have this around. Who'll take the next?"

"I'll take it," muttered a voice, and up stepped the worse looking tramp that ever was seen.

"Hello, what ash barrel did you come out of?" asked Sam.

"Do you think you can knock spots out of me?" asked that bold, bad tramp, squinting off.

"Haven't the least doubt of it," cried Sam, diving into his interior and bringing out a bottle.

"Then let's see you do it," and the tramp began to ascend the steps to the platform.

Psst! tiff!

Something struck that tramp right in the muzzle, spattered right and left and sent him flying backwards off those steps quicker than seat.

"Next!" cried Sam. "Peter get a stretcher and carry away the wounded."

## CHAPTER VI.

SAM's manner of knocking out that too previous tramp was simple enough when you know how it was done.

All he had was a mineral water siphon, turned on at full head.

He kept a few of these things for his own use, and this time they came in handy.

The tramp thought that a steam boiler had exploded for certain.

He got down off those steps so quick that he never knew whether he walked or rode.

Then the crowd geyed him most to death, and a special constable came moping along and gathered him in.

After the tramp had gone Sam went into the store-house back of him and brought out a box, which he proceeded to open.

"Now then, fellow wayfarers, in this vale of tears," he shouted, "here is the nicest little article in the world, and sold so cheap that you really can't afford to be without it."

"This is Smart & Co.'s patent non-explosive non-corrosive, anti-bilious, gilt-edged, swallow-tailed, white-kidded yeast cakes, put up in boxes containing twenty cakes and all for the very laughable sum of ten cents a box."

"What would we do without yeast, fellow wayfarers. Don't the sun rise in the yeast? If you want to rise early eat a yeast cake before going to stains of all kinds, iron rust, or plain every day dirt. Come up here, my son, you have a grease cake in your pocket-book. That's the value of spot on your jacket, been laying up lunches for yeast."

"Did it take the spots out of him?" asked Peter.

"No, but it knocked spots out of the fleas. The boarders. Don't the sun rise in the yeast? If you want to rise early eat a yeast cake before going to stains of all kinds, iron rust, or plain every day dirt. Come up here, my son, you have a grease cake in your pocket-book. That's the value of spot on your jacket, been laying up lunches for yeast."

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"This yeast is made of hops, you ought to jump at the chance I offer you and skip up here and buy some. Makes the best bread biscuits you ever ate and takes the cake. Dough nut think I'm deceiving you."

"Here you go now, the last chance to buy a box of these celebrated no-discount, up-and-up yeast cakes, at ten cents a box. They lighten your bread, your cares and your work at the same time, so be enlightened and buy."

"There was a young man from the East  
Who never ate bread made with yeast  
Till he ate a cream tart  
With the yeast sold by Smart,  
When he muttered 'My word, what a feast!'"

of elbow grease, and producing the highest polish in a few seconds.

"Our two mokes use it for their complexion, and you can easily see that they are fast color and won't wash—very seldom saw a coon that would, unless you made him. Tell you what, this polish just makes things shine, like a bootblack."

"Five cents for a cake of this ebony polish, makes the stove shine like a darky belle: can be used either hot or cold, in any climate, by old maids or married women, and never loses its luster, if it does, money refunded—if you can catch us."

"Pass 'em right out, Peter, every seventh package given away, luck in odd numbers, you see. Sold a gross of 'em to a church fair last month;

Just at dusk, however, when he was thinking of driving out into the public square, there was no Jeremiah John to be found.

"Have you seen that coon, Pete?" he asked.  
"No, not since supper. Sol is in the kitchen, though."

"Call him, won't you?"

"Hey, Solomon. Oh, Solomon, hey, you Solomon Levi Andrew Jackson George Washington Smith! Come out here, you ebony imp," roared Peter.

"What yer want, Marse Peter?" asked that little coon, as he came into the yard.

"Where's your father?"

"Donno, Marse Peter," answered young Solomon, with a grin.



Jeremiah John, sitting under the spout of the water tank, wished for a shower. He got it. Sam was just the boy to gratify the coon's wishes. No sooner said than done. The words had scarcely left the moke's lips, when Sam yanked on the valve rope.

"Don't charge you anything extra for the poetry; it's all made by machinery, and, therefore, I can get it cheaper. Here's another:

"Old Noah he built him an ark  
All covered with hickory bark;  
He took two of each beast,  
And likewise Smart's yeast  
To lighten his way through the dark."

"This style three for a quarter, special discount to the trade. They don't fly high, and they're easy to catch. Get onto this:

"When Columbus came here from Genoa  
He said 'twas a horrible boah  
That he'd not in his jacket  
Of Smart's yeast a packet,  
And declared he'd forget it no moah."

"Step up, ladies, and purchase a box of these cakes for ten cents. Cheapest article in the market—mark it well, my friends, and buy a box."

All the time Sam was rattling away like this he was passing the boxes over to Peter and Solomon, who were disposing of them at railroad speed.

Sam's nonsense took the crowd, and they laughed, while he took their dimes and giggled likewise.

When the yeast cakes began to go slow Sam switched off upon collar-buttons, looking-glasses, and lastly stove polish.

"Buy our new ultra lightning stove polish, ladies, the handiest article you ever saw; can be good-sized town, and Sam made up his mind as soon as he saw the place that he would do well.

girls thought they were caramels and chewed 'em all up; got their teeth black, Smart's tooth paste cleaned 'em again, white as snow. Open another box? Of course. Never saw such a sensible crowd as I've got to-night."

Sam's tongue was hung on a swivel to-night, and the way it wagged was a caution, but he got there all the same, and that was what he wanted.

When the time came to put out the lights and close up, he had raked in a cozy little pile of dollars, and felt decidedly satisfied.

"Not a bad Saturday night, eh, Petey?" he said to his chum as they retired, for the partners generally collared on to a double-bedded room, so that they could talk over their affairs and have a quiet smoke and chat before turning in for the night.

"We got 'em just where they lived, didn't we?"  
"I should say we did. You must have greased that tongue of yours. I never heard it go so fast and so constantly, old man."

"Special occasions, my dear boy, call for special efforts. You aren't kicking at the result, I suppose?"

"Nixey kick," said Peter, and in a few minutes both boys were in bed and sleeping, as only young, healthy and honest boys can sleep.

Next day was Sunday and the whole firm took a rest, Jeremiah excepted, for he indulged in the tremendous dissipation of going to meeting five times between sunrise and midnight.

Along in the middle of the week they struck a good-sized town, and Sam made up his mind as soon as he saw the place that he would do well.

"No fibs," said Sam. "Where is he?"

"Reckon he done go to camp meetin', boss," replied the coon, grinning more than ever.

"The mischief he has! Honor bright?"

"Wall, he done tol' me he war 'tendin' to go, boss, an' I spec' him keep him wo'd."

"All right, go and get dressed."

Solomon ran off, still grinning, and then Sam said to Peter:

"Petey, this thing has got to be stopped, now and here."

"What'll you do? Discharge him?"

"No, for we always hire him over again, and things go on as bad as ever."

"He's really very valuable to us."

"Of course he is; but we've got to be able to depend on him, and break up this bad habit of his of going to camp meetings."

"He goes, no matter who holds it, black, white Baptist, Methodist, or Universalist."

"I know he does, and this time I mean to give him a lesson."

"I'm in with you, whatever it is, Samuel."

"All right. I'll think it up."

Sam did think of it.

He found out where the camp meeting was held and by which road Jeremiah would be most likely to return.

Then he hired four strapping big country bumpkins to work off a little job on that camp-meeting.

He posted them concerning what they were to do



and agreed to see them again after the sale, and help carry out the racket if necessary.

Then he and Peter drove into the square, lighted up and got right down to business.

There was no Jeremiah to toot on the cornet and draw the crowd; but Sam was a good all-round performer and could do anything, and the way he blew the bugle was a caution to men of weak lungs.

Then he and Peter sang a hunting chorus as loud as ever they could sing, while Solomon beat the drum.

When the crowd began to assemble, little Solomon did a song and dance, which tickled the spectators mightily.

The one man had been provided with a lot of John to the big tree, put his back against it and tied him tight. Ropes went around his body, legs and ankles till he was bound so securely to the tree that he could not move.

Then one of the men got a box, hidden in the bushes, and took out several strings of sausages.

These were slung around the coon's neck, around his body, stuffed into all his pockets, with the ends dangling out, and fastened to the ropes that secured him.

He looked like an animated sausage himself when they got through with him.

As Sam Smart would have remarked, you never saw a sight like that.

Well-fed dogs, half-starved plugs, hungry dogs,

sausages hung from every part of him, and they were so secured that it would take a tolerably good tug to loosen them.

Then the men scattered a few missing links along the road in the direction of the town.

By this time the barking of the dogs was louder and nearer.

In a few minutes a man dashed by on horseback, and cried out:

"Is everything all right?"

"You bet."

"Let her go then, they'll git thar, Eli."

Then the man rode on and the three conspirators dusted.

Wow—wow—wow!

Rrr—row—bow—wow!

The dogs were coming.

Poor Jeremiah John Joseph, et cetera!

There he stood in the moonlight, bound hand and foot to that big tree.

Up came the dogs and scented him at once.

Oh, what a feast!

Sausages everywhere, and only to be jumped at and secured.

There were more than forty dogs of every age, size, sex, color and previous condition of servitude.

Black, white, yellow, brindle, spotted and mixed dogs; big, little, long, short, fat, lean, bow-legged, long-bodied, stump-tailed dogs; terriers, bull pups and mongrels, all on the lookout for a square

meal.



They were there for grub, and they meant to have it. They snapped at the dangling sausages, and now and then yanked one free. Occasionally some big brute of a dog, with a voice like a thunderclap, would snap at the sausages around Jeremiah's neck, and then that scared coon would think his time had come.

Peter and Moses, the dog, then did their act, and Sam and Solomon played duets on the banjo, the bones, tambourines, and other musical instruments, and after that Sam rattled off one of his numerous patter songs in his own lively style.

By this time he had got his audience in a good humor, and he started the sale, putting up such things as would go most readily to begin with.

Whenever there began to be a low tide in the sale, Sam or Peter would set things to booming with a comic song or a string of jokes, and then business would be rushing.

Finally, at ten o'clock, the lights were put out and the crowd dispersed.

Meanwhile Jeremiah John had been having the liveliest kind of a time at the camp meeting, and was now returning.

The road was a lonely one, for he had remained long after everyone else, who lived in the heart of the town, and so had no companions.

To encourage himself, however, he sang camp meeting hymns in a loud voice, the sound being carried to a long distance in the stillness of the night.

The countrymen sent out to waylay him were posted at various points along the road, and when the first heard Jeremiah coming, a long way off, he passed the word to the others by a signal previously agreed upon.

Then one of the gang hurried back to town as fast as a horse could carry him, while the others joined forces and waited for Jeremiah.

and epicures, all followed, literally dogging the steps of that mounted scout.

In the interim, Jeremiah had been coming along warbling some extra pious ditty in a three story voice, to keep up his spunk:

"Chillen keep in de middle ob de road,  
Chillen keep in de middle ob de road,  
Don' yo' look to de right,  
Don' yo' look to de lef'  
But keep in de middle ob de road."

There's where he kept himself, but suddenly, from behind a big tree at the side of the highway, three dusky forms sprang out in the full light of the moon.

"Stand and deliver!"

"Your money or your life!"

"Throw up your hands!"

Such were the blood curdling remarks of the three dime novel heroes.

Poor Jeremiah was paralyzed with fright.

"Don' yo' teeh me, gen'n," he wailed. "I aint got nuffin', deed I hasn't."

"Beware!" cried all three men at once as they grabbed the trembling coon.

He shook so that if they had not held him he would have fallen to the ground.

In the distance could be heard the tramp of a horse's hoofs and the barking of dogs.

"Hurry up, Bill, we've no time to lose."

"No more we hain't, I swan."

Then those three bold, bad men took Jeremiah meal.



They jumped upon the coon, they snapped at the sausages, they barked and they growled.

Poor Jeremiah was in a terrible fright, for he thought any minute he would be chewed to bits.

He tried yelling at the dogs, but they couldn't hear him for the noise they made themselves.

If they had heard, how much attention would they have paid to him?

They were there for grub, and they meant to have it.

They snapped at the dangling sausages, and now and then yanked one free.

Occasionally some big brute of a dog, with a voice like a thunderclap, would snap at the sausages around Jeremiah's neck, and then that scared coon would think his time had come.

Once a spiteful little terrier yanked a whole string of chopped dog meat out of Jeremiah's breeches pocket, and made off with it.

A dozen or more precious pups put after him, and then what a scrambling there was.

The wise ones remained around the tree, however, and made things hilarious for Jeremiah.

From yelling that coon passed on to singing jubilee songs, but even that did not terrify the dogs.

As long as there was a single sausage left they were bound to stay.

There stood that coon, trembling with fright, the dogs jumping and barking all around him, while he sang camp-meeting tunes in a cracked and tremulous voice.

The dogs did not mind the singing, though it was bad enough, goodness knows.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, why don't somebody come an' took dese dogs away? I feel convinced dat dey'll chew my froat in a minit."

"Ole Petey looked so wicked  
When I axed him fo' a ticket,  
Climbin' up de golden stairs,  
Oh, yo' orter heah him holler  
When I axed him fo' a—"

"G'way dar, yo' pups, g'way I tol' yo'. Does yo' want'er eat me up? Oh, de Lawd o' massy, I see a gone coon fo' shuah!

"Dis am all de wo'k ob dot cream-colored coon, Gawge Wash'n'ton Brown, I know it am; he 'm jealous ob de powah I hab 'fom de Lawd, in lead-in' sinnahs to 'pentance, dat's what's de mattah.

"Oh, dem dogs! G'way dar, you big bees! Seat! Shoo! Get out! Oh, de bressed Lawd! I see a dead niggah fo' shuah! Dat dar Gawge Brown, de no 'count coon. He done all dis jes' to dribe me 'way 'fom de meetin'."

"Oh, de rocks and de mount'ins  
Shall all flee away,  
And we shall have no hiding-place  
Dat day."

"Shoo! I tol' yo'! Bress de Lawd, ef eber I get out ob dis place alibe I nebber go to anoder cam' meetin' long as I lib. De boss tol' me I mus'n, an' I jes' run away and say nuffin', an' dis yer am a judgment fo' it.

"Wait till I coteh dat Wash'n'ton Brown, an' de res' ob dem faded out nigs! Reekin I punch deir jaws fo' dem. Dey am all jealous ob me kase I kin shout an' pray an' sing an' call de sinnahs up to de anxious seat bettah dan dey kin. Oh, fo' de lan' sakes! g'way I tol' me, yo' debbil dogs, g'way dis berry minnit, I tol' yo'. Sabe me, deah Lawd! Why de mischief don't somebody come and shoo dem off, I wondah?"

Thus mused, sang, and shouted that benighted ducky, while the dogs yelped, snapped, jumped, barked, and growled all over, under, about, and around him.

By this time the sausages were pretty nearly exhausted, and Jeremiah's clothes were a sight to see and weep at.

They were torn, cut, scratched, covered with dirt, grease, and dog's hair, and might have been boiled down for soap grease.

His wool had lost its kink, and his ebony face had grown the color of ashes, while his usually at cheeks seemed to have all shrunk away.

Here and there a stray sausage adhered to him, or hung out of his pockets, and for these the pups made a great scramble.

Most of them had had all they wanted and had gone home, but there were a few of the always-hungry breed, and they were bound to stay as long as there was any chance to get a bite.

Jeremiah was cold with fear, hoarse from shouting, sore from being tied up so tight, and mad at being made the victim of his rival's spite, as he firmly believed.

He never once imagined that it was Sam Smart who had worked the snap off on him.

It was all George Washington Brown and the cream-colored niggers at the camp meeting.

They had had everything their own way till Jeremiah came, and then he just gobbled the cream of the business of shouting, praying and exhorting.

Consequently, it was these disappointed coons and no one else who had thus vented their spleen upon him.

One by one the dogs faded away, but some stayed, thinking perhaps that they would get a second ration of sausage if they remained.

They didn't disturb Jeremiah, for every scrap of sausage had been cleaned out, but that didn't do him any good.

"Specs I hab to stay heah all night," he wailed. "Reekon de nex' time de boss tol' me I mus'n do suffin', I min' wha' he says, an' not go sneakin' away like dis, an' get inter all sorts of trubble."

Sam's lesson had apparently had the desired effect.

"I declar fo' it, I won't go to 'noder cam' meetin' as long as I lib, so dar! Yo' couldn't dribe me, dat yo' couldn't! De boss know bes', an' de nex' time I do jus' wha' he say, bet yo' life."

Oh, Sam was a good fellow when Jeremiah was in trouble.

At last, after standing tied to that tree for more than an hour, the coon heard shouts.

"Jeremiah John!"

"Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham!"

"Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac Moses Glory Hallelujah Smith!"

Sam Smart and Peter Pocket were looking for the missing coon.

"Heah I is, boss!" yelled the ducky, as loud as he could yell. "Heah I is. Come an' sabe me, fo' de Lawd's sake."

Sam and Peter came driving along in a light wagon, and saw the poor coon tied to a tree.

Sam thought the joke had gone far enough and so he came out to liberate the unfortunate moke and send him home.

The dogs ran away as Sam jumped up and slashed about him with a long whip.

"Well, Jeremiah John, what does all this mean? You didn't show up at all this evening."

"No, boss, I didn', an' I see berry sorry."

"Oh, you are, eh?"

"Yas'r. I wen't to de cam' meetin', arter yo' said I mus'n, and den, when I see comin' home a lot ob dem white niggahs what's jealous ob me, coteh me, tie me to dis tree, coter me all ober wif sassegers an' den set de dogs on me. Bress de Lawd! I fort shuah I war a gone coon mo'n fifty times."

"Oh, you did, eh?"

"Yas, boss, but I gib yo' my wo'd ob honah, dat I'll neber go to anoder cam' meetin' long as I lib!"

"You won't?"

"No, sah, true as I lib an' breathe."

"Good enough. See that you don't," and then Sam cut the ropes, he and Peter helped Jeremiah into the back of the wagon and all hands drove back to the hotel.

"Guess I fetched him this time Petey," said Sam, when the two boys were alone.

"That remains to be seen," remarked Peter, with a laugh. "You can't depend on a coon."

"Well, I've had some fun anyhow, and I guess he'll be good for a time. Let's go to sleep."

## CHAPTER VII.

THINGS went along hummily with Sam Smart after his little joke on Jeremiah, and he had nothing to complain of.

Four or five days after that, he ran into a small, but very lively town, made his preliminary announcements in the afternoon, and prepared for a big business in the evening.

"I've got an idea," said Peter, suddenly, as he and Sam came out from supper.

"Keep it, Petey, we're going to have a cold winter," said Sam.

"And that is, that if Jeremiah goes to another camp meeting—"

"Well, he won't go," said Sam, "and that settles it. I won't have that big, lazy coon breaking us all up every time he wants to indulge in a little religious dissipation. I'll be glad when cold weather comes and the camp-meeting season ends."

"Then there'll be revivals," put in Peter.

"Well, he won't revive much, I can tell him that."

"Oh, he'll find a way to get off. You see if he doesn't."

"And I'll find a way to bring him up standing, never fear."

The subject was dismissed for the present, Sam keeping a watch on the coon, however, to see that he did not slip away unbeknown to anybody.

When it grew dark business began, and Sam shot off his mouth as loud as he could yell to draw a crowd.

When quite a number of the oldest inhabitants, first citizens, and loungers had gathered, Sam dropped on the show, took up a box, and cried out:

"Here you are, gents, the best and handiest article you ever saw. Our new and improved

razor can be used by dudes with base-ball mustaches, terriers with cast-iron beards, or the young man just sprouting his first chin whisker.

"No danger of cutting your cheek or taking a slice out of your ear with these razors. Use 'em myself, and never draw blood. Will mow off the stiffest beard or the tenderest down with equal facility.

"These razors are neither politicians nor oarsmen, gentlemen, for they haven't a pull; are made of the best steel, none of your hoop iron galvanized, and will last a life-time.

"Shaving is actually a pleasure if you use these razors. Fifty cents apiece, and a cake of soap given away gratis. Step right up, gents, and buy one!"

The razors did not go very fast, for those countrymen didn't care to spend fifty cents at a clip unless it was to go to the circus, and Sam had to put up something else.

"Peter, just hand out those two cent boxes of blacking; this crowd hasn't any money to spend. They want a free show, a shaving ticket and a prize chromo, all for nothing.

"Some people think that the world was made expressly for them, and that nobody else has a right to make a living. If you tried the same game on them, they wouldn't like it at all, and that reminds me of a song."

Then Sam threw out his chest, took a long breath, and began the following anthem:

"There are some folk we meet who are always complaining,

They want rain when it's clear, and the sun when it's raining.

They are always too poor, out of health, or in trouble, If you offer them money they strike you for double. But this world isn't run by such tiresome old cranks, If it was, to some other I'd soon shake my shanks.

I don't think I'd like it at all.

"There are some folk so awfully stingy an' mean, That they'd dine on a cracker and half a sardine. While others will rattle away every cent, And make their poor landlords go sing for the rent, As for me I would hit upon something between, I wouldn't be wasteful nor would I be mean, For I don't think I'd like it at all.

"There are plenty of fellows who seem to delight in contention and strife and are all the time fightin'. They are never content if they can't make a bother, And if it ain't for one reason then it's another. They may live, if they like, in confusion and strife, But I wouldn't fancy that kind of a life, I don't think I'd like it at all."

This tickled the crowd, and after that Sam sold everything he put up and did so well that he concluded to stay for another night's business in town.

The next evening, however, Jeremiah sneaked away, as was his wont whenever he got a chance, to attend prayer meeting in the colored church of the town.

He was gotten up regardless in his suit of green and gold lace, cocked hat, big shoe buckles and all, and expected to make, as he did, a great sensation.

It was a regular prayer meeting night, and he somehow or another found out that there was a darky church in town, and therefore resolved to go.

Off he slipped, and of course Sam did not miss him till he was ready to begin the evening's business.

"Solomon!" he called.

"Yes'r," answered that ready coon.

"Where's your father?"

"Donno, sah."

"Do you ever know?"

"Yes'r."

"When is that?"

"When he'm gone to bed, sah, fo' den he snore loud 'nuff to shake de windahs."

"Well, I suppose he's gone off to some prayer meeting."

"It am one ob de nights, sah," said Solomon, with a grin.

"Look here, Solomon, why can't you let a fellow know when the regular nights come around so that I can watch him?"

"Deed, sah, ebery night am a reg'lar one, I fluk. Ef it ain't Baptis' it's Meiodis', or Temp'ance, or Cong'ational, or love fens' or 'vival or suffin' or oder."

"I believe you. It's sure to be something or other; anything to get off. I'll talk to him when he gets back."

Jeremiah, in the meantime, was enjoying himself at the prayer meeting.

He got there tolerably early and sat alongside a fat wench in one of the front rows.

The aforesaid wench was a widow, with a snag little boodle, and more than one coon had tried to marry her.

There were four or five of them after her, and when they came in and saw Jeremiah sitting by her side they were slightly mad.



"Who'm dat big brack niggah settin' side o' Mis' Wilson, Brudder Sampson?" asked one dizzy old darky beau of his neighbor in a hoarse whisper.

"Dunno, sah, but I flink him got a mighty big gall, Brudder White."

"Yas'r, an' dat ain' de propah sperrit to show at a pra'r meetin', 'tall, Brudder Sampson."

"Sistah, am yo' one ob de chillen ob light?" asked Jeremiah presently, nudging up close to the Widow Wilson.

He might better have asked if she was a child of darkness, for she was as black as he was himself.

"Specs I is, brudder," giggled the widow.

"Bress de Lawd!"

"Amen, brudder!"

Jeremiah soon came in with his big voice and drowned all the rest of the congregation.

"Dat am bery good, bred'ren," he said, when three verses had been sung, "but dere am a lack ob hommony in de singin'. Eberybody jine togeder in de las' verse."

Everybody did join, but Jeremiah discounted the whole of them, and beat them by a hundred points.

Then the leader read a short chapter, and asked somebody to say something.

Jeremiah was on his feet in an instant, ready and willing to say a good many things.

"Bred'ren an' sistahs, toilahs by de wayside, trab'lers to de promise lan', I want ax yo' a ques-

tion, and Jeremiah squeezed the widow's hand and cast the biggest kind of sheep's-eyes at her.

Then there was more singing, and again Jeremiah endangered the roof by the way he sent his voice rolling about among the rafters.

The leader made a few remarks, and one of the sisters related her experience, after which a brother showed what an awful villain he had been and what a superlative angel in cream color he now was, all through having joined the church.

It was very affecting, but Jeremiah heard nothing of it, for he was crushing the widow with all his might.

How furious Brothers White, Sampson, Snowflake and Hambone did get!



The mule wouldn't move. Jeremiah was in despair. "Fo' de Lawd's sake, what I do now?" he gasped, giving the obstinate animal a final whack. "Spec my time am come, fo' shuah, ef I wait fo' dat muel to git across de track."

"Don' yo' flink dat a pra'r or two mought do yo' good afo' de meetin' begin, sistah?"

"Specs it would, brudder," gurgled the widow as Jeremiah John took her fat hand in his.

"Den, le's pray, sistah," and Jeremiah flopped down on his marrow-bones in the pew and yanked the Widow Wilson down alongside.

If power of lung makes prayer more effective, Jeremiah's petitions must have gone straight up, never stopping by the way.

"Oh, Lawd, bress all dis con'gation," he shouted, "spread de gospul froo all de lan' an' soften de hearts ob dy chillen. Make 'em jes' like a lump o' dough, deah Lawd, so's ye can mol' 'em jes' any way yo' want."

"Look down on all dese chillen an' tote 'em up to de trone ob glory. Ef dey do'n' wantor come, jes' cotch 'em by de slack ob de breeches an' yank 'em in, any way to get 'em in, good lawd, an' pre-went de debil f'om gittin' 'em."

"Bress all dese trab'lers in a weary lan', bress me, bress de deah sistah by my side an' bress eberybody what b'longs to dis church. Gadder in all de coons in town, deah lawd, an' ef dey don' come, take de club ob 'ligion to dem an' drike 'em in."

"Amen!" groaned several coons, and then a black-and-tan maiden in a yellow dress with purple ribbons and a red bonnet, tackled the melodeon and made it grunt.

"Sing de fo'ty-fo'th hymn in de collection," cried the leader, taking the desk.

The organist played the accompaniment and then a few stray voices started in on the hymn.

Hab yo' made up yo' min' war yo' am gwine to lib in de nex' worl'? Am it by de riber ob light in de sweet fiel' ob Eden, or am it in de lan' ob fiah and brimstun, whar de debil cotches sinnahs, to roas' dem on de coals, an' whar dere am wailin' an' slashin' ob teef?

"How many ob my bred'ren heah to-night kin call demselves chillen' ob de Lawd? Don' yo' make no mistake brudders, don' yo' go to deseibin' yo' selves, sistahs. Yo' am'nt de Lawd's chillen unless yo' got de right sperrit in yo'! Don' yo' wantor get dat sperrit, chillen? Co'se yo' does, ef yo'm de chillen ob de bressed Lawd. Les' pray."

Down went Jeremiah again, hauling the widow alongside, and yelling out:

"Bress de Lawd. Come right down yer into dis con'gation. Neber min' de shingles, but come right down froo de roof. Plast'rin' am ob no 'count when dere's sinnahs to be sated."

He went on in this strain for about ten minutes and then his breath gave out and he had to quit.

"Dat buck niggah am too prebious, Brudder Snowflake," whispered Brother White. "He monopolize de hull meetin'."

"Don' car' so much fo' dat," muttered the other, "ef he didn' monopolize de widdah so much. Wha' yo' flink, brudder Hambone?"

"He am a rantin' hyp'critter, dat wha' he am. He on'y jes' come heah fo' to mash," answered Brother Hambone, "an' dat am de trufe."

Deacon Bighead then got up and made an ora-

tion. They could see the spooning, but were powerless to prevent it.

"Ef it warn't agin de rules ob de church to car' razors, bet yo' life I'd cut de top o' dat coon's head off ter-night," growled Brother Sampson.

"He am freshad dan buttah what ain't salted," remarked Brother White. "Ef I didn' hab 'ligion I broke him jaw."

When Jeremiah had recovered his wind he related his own experience, and knocked the other fellow's confession silly.

All the sinners from Cain down to the present day, if they had been rolled into one, could not have equaled him in his enormity of crime, according to his own account.

He had committed murders by the score, had forty wives, broken into seven banks, swilled hogsheads of rum, gambled away millions, outsworn all the pirates that ever were, beaten his wife, stolen chickens and set fire to the house lots of times.

"Tol' yo' what, brudders an' sistahs, I war a reg'lah roarah, 'deed I was, but now I'se sated, an' I'se gwine stret up to glory when Gab'el blow him trumpet."

How the widow did smile upon him when he sat down.

Tell you, he was a big fellow in her eyes after that, and he knew it.

Didn't those other coons get terribly jealous? Why, they were fairly green with envy.

He had outlived the whole of them and distanced the whole field in the widow's affections.



"Kin I see yo' hum aftah de meetin', sistah?" he asked, when he sat down.

"Spees yo' kin, brudder," she giggled, looking unutterable things.

The meeting was one of those long-drawn-out, never-ending affairs, denominated protracted, and lasted till after ten o'clock.

It had to break up at last, and Jeremiah had the wind-up, much to the disgust of his rivals.

Then he coupled on to the widow, and sailed down the aisle with her two hundred pounds of dusky loveliness hanging on his arm.

When he disappeared down the street those frozen-out coons held a council of war on the meeting-house steps.

couldn't. Common niggahs ain' got no show when Jeremiah John Josephani 'roun', I tol' yo'.

"Didn't dey look mad when I come out ob de church wif de widdah on my ahim?" Well, I guess not. Oh, dey'd jes' like to chaw me up, dat's wha' dey would, but dey's 'fraid ob me, dat's wha' dey is."

The widow lived quite a distance out of town, and Jeremiah's road was a lonely one.

Before he reached the more thickly settled districts, and was hoofing it along the road, four coons suddenly jumped out from behind a tree, and grabbed him.

"Try to cut us out, will yo'?" "Fink yo'm dreful smart, don' yo'?"

It was either that or go naked, however, and he couldn't think of the latter.

First he put on the shirt, which did not more than half cover his stomach.

"H'm! Dat ain' much bettah dan a ches' protectah," he muttered, "but mebbe it's bettah dan nuffin."

Then he pulled, or rather dragged, on the breeches, which, in order to meet the shirt, had to be hauled up nearly to his knees.

He managed to button them around him, but didn't dare to take a long breath, for fear of causing an explosion.

Then he put on the jacket, the tails scarcely com-



Now that the train had gone by Jeremiah's view was unobstructed, and he saw that mule putting towards home at the top of his gait. For a moment that poor coon was speechless. "Dere goes my fi' dollahs!" he finally remarked.

"Wha' we do wif dat ornary coon?" asked brother Snowflake.

"Reckon we hab to do suffin', else he tote ed widdah 'way fom us, right undah our noses," observed brother Sampson.

"Tol' yo' what we do," said brother White.

"What am dat?" asked all the other brothers in chorus.

"Make him look ridickerluss, an' take all de pride out'n um."

"Like to gib him a coat ob tah an' fadders, place ob dat stunnin' one he wear," sputtered brother Hambone.

"Don' yo' do dat," spoke up brother White.

"Jus' wait fo' me, bredren, an' we fix him."

Then brother White hurried down a side street, and presently returned with a bundle under his arm.

"Spees we'd bettah hurry ef we want'er catch dat coon," he muttered.

Then all four of them hurried on in the direction from which Jeremiah would be coming.

That festive coon saw the widow home, hung on the gate with her until it threatened to break down, and finally wished her good-night.

"Tol' yo' what, ef my ol' woman wasn't waitin' fo' me to hum, I'd jes' like ter shin up to dat gal," he remarked, as he started toward the hotel. "She'm de lubliest critter I see in a long time, an' she hab lots ob money."

"H'm! reckon I cut out all dem col'd mashahs distime. Dey couldn' hol' a candle to me, dey

"Yo' kean't trample on our feelin's fo' nuffin, I tol' yo'."

While brother Snowflake and brother Hambone held Jeremiah so that he could not escape, the other two coons yanked off that gorgeous coat, vest and hat, and left him standing only in his breeches and shirt.

Then they suddenly tripped him up, threw him on the ground, and sat on him, while Messrs. Sampson and White stripped him as clean as a singed chicken.

"Dere yo' am," cried brother White, throwing a bundle on the ground and gathering up Jeremiah's things. "Jes' yo' put dem on, an' get 'long de bes' way yo' kin."

Then these coons dusted, leaving Jeremiah nothing but his shoes and stockings and a bundle of old clothes.

The weather was not cold, but it was not warm enough to go around with nothing on, and Jeremiah began to shiver and shake.

The moon shone bright, and showed him the retreating forms of his four persecutors.

"Wha' am I gotter put on?" he muttered as he opened the bundle.

A boy's jacket, shirt and trousers was what it contained.

"Gorry! dem fings wouldn't fit my boy Solomon," gasped Jeremiah, holding them up in the moonlight. "How yo' 'spees I'se gwine to get inter dese?"

ling to his waist and the sleeves reaching only to the elbows.

He was obliged to bunch himself all up in a small compass, for fear of causing a general strike in the clothing department.

His elbows stuck out as if he were carrying bundles; his back was bent over and his knees looked too weak to hold him up.

In this manner he started for home, not daring to walk too fast for fear of a wreck.

"Jes' 'magine how I look wif dese little close on me!" he grunted. "Spees dey flak I'se growed too fas', an' dat nuffin' 'll fit me. Bet de boss be tearin' mad, but I don' see how I kin help it."

Sam, having finished business for the night, was standing by the desk in the hotel office, smoking a cigar, when a queer-looking figure entered.

Peter was sitting in a chair tipped up against the little counter, and three or four countrymen were sitting or standing around.

In came Jeremiah John, clad in his misfits, and looking like a scarecrow.

All hands laughed and Sam said:

"Why, Jeremiah, how you have grown?"

"Why don't you stand up straight?" asked Peter.

"Fraid to, Marse Potey. Spees dis coat split up de back ef I do."

"Where did you get the high water Knickerbockers?"

"Catch on to the baby's shirt?"

"Been changing clothes with Solomon, have you?"



Poor Jeremiah John looked solemn enough when he came in, but now he looked as though life were a perpetual funeral.

He began to blubber, and big tears ran down his ebony cheeks.

His lips expanded and looked like two beef-steaks exposed for sale, while a deep sigh escaped him.

"It am bad 'nuff to be robbed an' mos' killed wifout bein' made fun ob aftahwuds," he remarked.

Everybody laughed, Peter nearly fell off his chair and Sam roared. That broke Jeremiah all up.

The uniform, by the way, had been returned, wrapped up in paper, per a small colored boy that very morning, and Sam now had it in his possession.

"Yes, and you looked like a fright," said Sam. "The uniform has been pawned by this time, I presume."

"I'se berry sorry, boss, an' I'll pay fo' de close ef yo'll take it out'n my wages."

"I don't want you any more," said Sam, firmly. "Don't wan' me no mor', boss?" murmured Jeremiah.

"No, sir. I don't want you." "Am I discharged, boss?"

"Why, the wagon has gone on to Whitneytown, fourteen miles away."

"Yo' don't say!" gasped Jeremiah, surprised in turn.

"Yes, sir. I heard Mr. Smart say so just before he left."

"Fo'teen mile, yo' say it am?"

"Yes, sir, a good fourteen miles."

"De kyars go froo dere, i s'pose?"

"No, it lies away from the line of the railroad."

"Spees yo' kin go somewhars near it on de kyars?"

"No, the first stop is at Jonesville, and that's twenty miles from it, to the east."



Poor Jeremiah John looked solemn enough when he came in, but now he looked as though life were a perpetual funeral. He began to blubber, and big tears ran down his ebony cheeks. "It am bad 'nuff to be robbed an' mos' killed wifout bein' made fun ob aftahwuds," he remarked.

He fairly howled with grief, and the result was sad to see.

His pent up emotions, when they finally burst up, caused his Tom Thumb coat to split clear up the back, sent all his waistband buttons flying and tore his tiny shirt to ribbons.

"Get out of here, you great calf!" cried Sam. "You've been off to meeting, I suppose, and acted fresh, and the coons have hunk on you. Get out!"

"Jee' listen to me a secon', boss," pleaded Jeremiah, vainly trying to hold his garments together.

"Get out!" cried Sam again, emphasizing the command with the toe of his boot.

Jeremiah yelled and got out, leaving behind him in his sudden flight the remains of what had once been a small boy's trousers.

"Somebody has committed a breach of the piece," said Sam, "and here are the pieces of the breeches."

The next morning Jeremiah came down in his ordinary clothes, those he wore when not on dress parade.

"You ran away last night, Jeremiah?" said Sam.

"Yes'r," said the penitent moke.

"And went to meeting?"

"Yes'r, but I won' do it agin."

"You disobeyed orders."

"Yes'r, but I got de wust ob it. 'Clar' to goodness, I'll neber go inside a col'd chu'ch agin."

"You had your uniform stolen from you?"

"Yes'r, dem coons do dat an' sen' me home jes' like yo' sawn me."

"Yes. If you try to go with us I'll have you arrested and put in the lockup."

Then Sam went off to his breakfast, and when the big wagon drove away an hour later, Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham and-all-the-rest Smith was not in his accustomed place.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

JEREMIAH JOHN was again bounced. Sam Smart had paid him off and had gone away without him.

"I don't want to have any more to do with you," Sam had said, "so you needn't come hanging around. You're discharged for good and all."

Then the wagon drove away and Jeremiah was left.

"Dey can't shake me like dat," muttered Jeremiah, after the wagon had gone. "I foller dem jes' whar eber dey go. Ef I don't ride in de waggin' I reckon I kin walk."

Having thus determined he walked into the hotel office and looked around.

"Hallo, Whitewash, what are you doing here?" the fellow asked.

"Oh, I'se lookin' roun' dat's all. I spees to foller de waggin' putty soon."

"Follow the wagon?" said the clerk, evidently much surprised.

"Yes'r, dat's wha' I said. Reckin I kin walk dat lilly way easy 'nuff."

"Fo' goodness sakes!"

"The road crosses the railroad about five or six miles from here, and then you keep straight on across the track."

"Den de kyars ain' no good?"

"Not a bit."

"How much yo' charge to take me dere in a waggin'?"

"About ten dollars."

"Laws a massy! I don' wanter buy de waggin'!" stammered that poor moke.

"That's as little as we can charge."

"Ain' dey anoder lib'ry stable in de hull town?"

"Yes, but they'll all charge you more than that."

"Sakes alibel! dat am rob'ry—reg'lar highway rob'ry. I wouldn't pay dat much to nobody."

"All right," said the clerk, lighting a cigar.

"Amn't dey a stage or nuffin' wha' goes ober dere?" Jeremiah asked at length.

"Yes, there's a stage goes on Saturday; regular fare, four dollars."

"Don't it go 'fore Sat'day?"

"No, and if the weather isn't pleasant, it won't go then."

"Lor' me! dis yer place mus' be drollful out ob de way—no railroads, no nuffin'."

"Yes, it is rather isolated," said the clerk.

"H'm! wha' dat?" asked Jeremiah, cocking his ears.

"I say it's rather isolated."



"H'm! I spec so; I neber heah tell ob de man mysef, but I reckon he do lib dere, if you say so. Putty big fellah, guess?"

"Oh, yes," answered the clerk, with a snort, "very much so."

Then Jeremiah walked out of the hotel and sauntered leisurely down the road.

"Fo'teen miles am mo' dan I wanten tackle," he muttered. "De day am bery wahm and eben wif dis brella I reckon I get reg'ly beat out."

Jeremiah boasted, among his other possessions, a big green cotton umbrella with a horn handle, and this he now had with him.

His uniform was with Sam and he wore in its place a very loud checked suit, the pattern of which you could see a block away.

He was a very conspicuous coon with his loud suit and big umbrella, and was sure to attract attention wherever he went.

That was one reason why he wished to get out of town; but it was not the only one.

Those four jealous coons who had waylaid him the night of the prayer meeting might be looking for him again for all he knew.

One interview with those mokes was all he wanted.

The sooner he got out of town, therefore, the better.

How to get to Whitneytown without walking was what bothered him most of all.

He started off, saw no wagons or carriages going his way, and kept on slowly till he reached the end of the town.

Here he saw an old darky working in a field by the side of the road, there being a little cottage close by where a raft of darky youngsters were playing on the stoop.

An old, very dilapidated looking mule was grazing in a corner of the lot, and attracted Jeremiah's attention more than anything else.

"Good-mo'nin', uncle," he said, stepping up to the fence.

"Good-mo'nin' to yo', sah," said the aged darky, pausing in his work.

"How am de crops doin' up yer way, sah?"

"Putty fa'r, putty fa'r, ef it warn't fo' de 'tater bugs an' de co'n wums an' dry spells, an' de chillen gettin' taken sick jes' when dey's wanted de mos', but oderside tings is gwine along putty well."

"Am dat yo' an'mile ober dar, sah?" asked Jeremiah, indicating the mule with a nod of his head.

"Yessir, dat mule am one ob de fambly, an' de one what do de leas' wo'k an' eat de mos' ob any ob us. Lor' me, nebbah, yo' neber see a mule eat de way dat one kin—an' kiek! Whoa! Gorra-mighty! how him heels do fly when he's riled!" and the aged African laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"Am he a good saddle mule, dat yer critter?"

"Yas'r, yo' kin ride dat yer mule anywhars, 'long as yo' don't pull too pow'ful on de lines. Den he kiek an' raise de berry debbil."

"Reckon yo' sell dat mule ef yo' git a fair offah, uncle?"

"Yas, I sell 'um ef I gits de price ob him."

"Wha' you fluk 'bout de right figgah fo' dat ol' plug, uncle?"

"Yo' wanten buy him, sah?"

"Yas'r, ef de price am convenient I buy de mule jes' now dis minnit."

"Wha' yo' say to a hund'ed dollahs, sah?" asked the old coon, scratching his head.

Jeremiah jumped six feet.

"Hund'ed dollah fo' dat ol' pile o' bones," he muttered. "Spees ef yo' get fo'ty yo's doin' fus' rate."

"I let yo' hab him fo' dat, sah, seein' it's yo', but I wouldn't let nobody else hab him fo' dat."

"Fo'ty dollah fo' dat mule."

"Ha h'm," grunted the old coon.

"Won' gub yo' dat. Won' gub mo'n twenty fo' him."

"Twenty dollah am cheap fo' a mule like dat, sah. Jas' siter de lots ob ways yo' kin make dat mule ob use."

"Yas'r, I done sidered dat a'ready, but I won' gib yo' twenty dollah fo' him, nohow."

"Wha' yo' gub fo' him den, sah, ef yo' wuz ter make a offah?" asked the owner of the mule, trying to pin Jeremiah down to positive figures.

"Dunno, sah, mought gib yo' ten dollah fo' him ef he war—"

"Yo' kin take him fo' dat."

"Hol' on, hol' on, jes' yo' wait a lilly bit, uncle," cried Jeremiah. "I didn't say I gub yo' ten dollah. I only said as how I mought. Ten dollahs am a lot ob money to gub fo' a mule what yo' donno nuffin' 'bout."

"Wall, what yer gub fo' him den?" asked the old darky, bound to get down to solid fact at once.

"Fi' dollahs," said Jeremiah with a positive air.

"Want! On'y fi' dollahs fo' dat oddicated mule?"

"Dat's all."

"Sah!"

"Dat am all him wuff."

"Wha' yo' wan' him fo'?"

"Jes' ter ride ter de nex' town."

"An' yo' habn't no use fo' him aftah dat?"

"No, sah. I don't spec he lib much mo' dan dat, nohow."

"Den yo' jes' wanten ride to de nex' town?"

"Ah'm."

The old darky scratched his head, the mule turned his head around and the darky youngsters stopped playing.

"Tol' yo' wha' I do, sah," the old man finally said.

"Wha' dat?"

"I hiah out dat muel to yo', to go to de nex' town an' yo' kin leabe him dar, an' de nex' time I go ober dar I kin foteh him back."

"Dat's a right. I done got no use fo' de muel aftah I reach de nex' town."

"I hiah yo' dat muel fo' fi' dollahs, an' yo' kin leabe him at de lib'ry stable. De man knows me fus' class."

"Fi' dollahs to borry dat yer ol' plug?"

"Wall, I reckon yo' couldn' git anyting cheaper dan dat," growled the aged African.

The mule seemed to think so too, for he let out an unearthly bray, pounded the fence with his hind heels, and cut across the lot.

"Dere, de muel hisself tink he's gwine too cheap."

"H'm, dat money orter buy two, free muels like dat."

"Wall, sah, yo' kin take him or leabe him, jis yo' like. Dat am de price, an' I don't go no lower, no sah!"

Jeremiah balanced the two alternatives in his mind, and concluded to hire the mule.

A fourteen-mile walk in the broiling sun was no slouch of a job, and well might he hesitate to undertake it.

The mule might not be a racer, but to be carried was far preferable to walking just then.

"I'll gub yo' fi' dollahs," the puzzled coon finally said.

"When yo' wanten staht?"

"Right away dis minnit."

"Bery well. H'yar, you Andy Jackson, go foteh dat mule. 'Poleon Bonypart, yo' go an' he'p yo' brudder cote'h um."

Away went the whole tribe of youngsters to catch the mule, who was now in the furthest corner of the field.

He had been a mild, inoffensive creature when there was no need for him, but now that he was wanted, his humor changed.

He wasn't going to be caught and hired out for that small amount if he knew it.

He raced all over the lot, kicking up his heels, snorting and acting like a very demon.

He led those darkies the wildest kind of a chase, and was like the Hibernian's flea, at not being captured.

"Whoa dar, creeter!" cried Napoleon. "Wha' yo' make sech a fool o' yo'self fo'? Spees you donno nuffin'."

Presently the mule allowed the boy to approach and even get hold of his head, appearing to be the most docile animal in creation.

The moment that dusky youth attempted to lead him, however, down went his head, up flew his heels, and away he cut.

The young coon was sprawled out upon the grass, while Mr. Mule stood quietly by the fence, forty rods away.

This sort of business was repeated several times until all hands got very much disgusted.

"Does yo' know wha' I do wif dat mule ef he war mine?" asked Jeremiah.

"Spees I don't. Wha' yo' do wif um?"

"Kill um bery quick. Sech a big fool muel as dat don't orter lib."

Finally the old nig, Jeremiah, all the boys, one of the neighbors, and the old nig's wife joined in the chase, got the mule in a corner, and caught him.

This operation had taken a good hour, and Jeremiah was as hot and mad as any heathen would have been.

"Reckin dat muel jes' sent by de ol' debbil to temp' dis co'd man, an' make um fo'get he'm a membah ob de chu'ch," he mused when they were le ding the mule across the field.

The animal was as mild as you please now, though there was no knowing when he would break out again.

"Spees de debbil know he kin make me sw'ar an' g't bilin' mad, contrary to de rules ob de chu'ch, an' so he sen' dat yer muel fo' to be his serbant. Nebber did see sech a pesky critter no-whar. Mos' made me sw'ar two, free times."

The old nig, the youthful coons, the neighbor, the old woman and Jeremiah finally led the mule up to the hitching-post outside of the fence.

Then one of the young coons went off to fetch a bridle, for Jeremiah would have to ride bareback, the mule's owner not possessing a saddle.

The little moke had to stop and chase a chip,

munk, stone a bullfrog, watch a big sucker in a quiet pool of the little brook, see if the red hen had stolen another nest, and climb a tree before his return, and all this took time.

"Dey neber war a boy sen' on an erran' yit, wha' didn't stop to do a hund'ed fings ob no 'count afo' he got back," mused the aged coon. "Whar in time dat boy be all dis time? Yo, Neb, go an see wha' make yo' brudderso long."

"Spees ef yo' wait fo' him to git yer, o, it'll be 'bout time to go to bed when he git back" muttered Jeremiah. "Ef dat warny boy I took a strap to um. Reckin dat make him mo' sudden."

However, the boy returned with the bridle after an absence of half an hour, and Jeremiah thought he would soon be away.

It took some time to harness that mule, however, simple as it seemed, and more time was wasted.

"Spees yo' bettah gub me de money afo' yo' git on de snimle's back," suggested the old coon. "He'm a mighty tricky beast, an' he might run away wif yo' afo' yo' had time to pay me jes' fo' debbiltry. an' I wouldn't like to run de resk."

Jeremiah John thereupon planked down his five dollars for the hire of the mule, was assisted to mount by the old darky, the boys, the neighbor, the old woman and the neighbor's wife, and hoisting his big umbrella grabbed the bridle strap and rode away.

"Wall, heah I am at las' on de road," he ejaculated. "Fought I neber would git stahted. Fi' dollahs fo' dis critter! Shucks! he wouldn't foteh dat much for old glue! Dat's wha' it cos' to hab de follies ob dis worl'. Dat fi' dollahs 'ud buy pocker-hankerehns fo' a hund'ed headen in furrin lan's, an' heah I is, a membah ob de church, speannin' it to go ridin'."

"Jeremiah, yo'm a awful sannah, an' ef yo' don't pent ob yo' sins I dunno wha's to become ob yo'. De idee ob wastin' fi' dollahs on a muel when money am wanted to spread de gospil in furren pahts. Yas, an' in pahts what isn't so furren, I reckon. Why, dat yer money would pay de pahnson's salary down in Blacktown fo' a monf. Jes' fluk wha' waste."

On jogged the mule at an even pace, and Jeremiah, finding this much more agreeable than walking, had plenty of time to indulge in reflections.

The road ran up hill and down, now under arching trees which threw a grateful shade, again through an open country where fields of ripening grain, orchards, farms, meadows and distant woods stretched out before the sight, now over bridges where the water babbled merrily, and then up and down dusty hills.

The mule jogged on at an even pace, needing no particular urging from his rider, who, with his big umbrella spread, rode on as contentedly as could be, and found abundant themes for thought.

"Dis am de way dat de 'pentant sannah rides froo dis wale ob tears," he remarked. "When he gib hisself up to de Lawd an' trus' to de gospil ebryting go smoo' an' fine, an' all him trouble am gone."

"Den when he flinks he guess he kin hoe his own row wifout de 'sistance ob de Lawd de debbil steps in an' de road gits rough, dere am stum'lin' blocks in his way, he ride de bery ol' debbil ob a mule, an' dere's bumps an' jolts, an' all sawts ob difficulty."

"Now, bredren, yo' wanten saddle de gospil, an' use de bridle ob fait on yo' journey froo dis worl' ef yo' wanten hab a easy time ob it, an' not go settin' yo'self up as mo' 'count dan de Lawd. Pra'r an' 'pentance am de sturrups, fuf an' hope am de reins, a yumble sperrit am de saddle, an' salvation am de town you'm headin' fo'. Jes' take all dese tings an' ride de hoss ob belief an' yo's boun' ter git dar."

"Bredren, les' sing to de glory ob de Lawd, de fo'ty sechen hymn, leabin' out de fo'teen and seban-teenf wusses. Sing, brudders, sing."

Then, still imagining that he was leading a prayer meeting, Jeremiah John Joseph a l finitum Smith let out the harmony that was in him to the following impromptu hymn:

"Oh, de wheel ob time am a turnin' round.  
Glory halleluyah!  
I spec' dat de bressen lan' am foun'.  
Glory halleluyah!  
We ain' got no use fo' dem early shoes,  
Kase de angel Gab'el shout ob news.  
An' we as gwine to pluck de fiddlers ob de head-  
euly goose.  
Oh, glory halle-halleluyah, oh!"

The mule stood all this till the last refrain and then he stopped so suddenly that Jeremiah was nearly thrown over the animal's head.

"G'up dar, yo' ol' fool!" he growled. "Wha' fo' yo' 'top right yer, in de middle ob de road? Yo' spec I done got to de end ob my journey? Well, I habn't, not fo' a cent. G'long dar!"

The mule, however, refused to budge an inch.

"G'long I tol' yo'," cried Jeremiah. "Reckin yo'm Lot gwine to stop jes' kase I git to singin'."



Sing all I'm min'ter, jes' yo' see ef I don', yo' ob-stinet critter!"

Thereupon Jeremiah began to warble some more without any regards whatever to the mule's feelings.

"Sarn' Petey, he stan' at de gate ob heaben, Oh, brudders won' yo' come along? De gate am open till de clock strike 'leven, Hurry up, brudders, jes' yo' come along! Yo' kean't git in when de night come down, An' den ol' Satan come snoopin' roun', An' tote yo' off to him hole in de groun'— Whoa, brudders, come right along, Glory, glory halleluyer, oh!"

That long suffering mule evidently knew that if he stood still he would have to endure no end of this kind stuff and so he bolted.

The way he did hoof it along the road, up hill and down, through dust and mud, over stones and over planks, was a caution to thoroughbreds, and nearly scared Jeremiah out of his wits.

He just had time to close that big umbrella, dig both heels into the creature's side, and hang on to his mane with all his own might.

Rattlety-bang went that mule's hoofs on the road, while Jeremiah got a worse shaking than if he had the chills.

Down the road, over a bridge, up a hill, past a few scattered houses, and then the railroad track was reached.

The mule was on the track when a sudden sound was heard.

"Whoo-hoo! toot-toot!"

A train was coming.

The mule stopped stark still.

There he was, right on the track, and a train approaching, not a quarter of a mile away.

The shock of the sudden halt nearly threw Jeremiah off again.

He glanced up the track and saw the train coming.

"G'long dar, yo' ol' fool! Don' yo' see de injine an' de kyars a-comin'?"

The mule refused to budge.

Nearer came the train.

Jeremiah yanked on the reins.

If the mule wouldn't go ahead, he might retreat.

No, he wouldn't do either.

Toot—toot—toot!

The engineer saw him and sounded the signal of warning.

"G'long dar!" yelled Jeremiah.

That cranky mule wouldn't stir a peg.

Jeremiah grabbed his big club with a firm grasp and belted the mule over the head, ribs, and flanks.

"G'long I tol' yo'. Don' yo' see de kyars a-comin'?"

The mule planted his hoofs more firmly on the track and wouldn't stir.

Jeremiah banged away with his club and used all his powers of persuasion to make the mule go on.

No use.

The train was now not more than five hundred feet away.

The whistle tooted and the bells rang, but the mule didn't scare for a bad half cent.

He stood his ground like a major, and Jeremiah couldn't make him give way an inch.

"G'long dar!" and the club took him across the yes.

"Toot-toot-who!"

The train was scarcely more than fifty yards distant.

The mule wouldn't move.

Jeremiah was in despair.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, what I do now?" he gasped, giving the obstinate animal a final whack. "Spec'ry time am come, shuah, ef I wait fo' dat muel to git ober de track."

If he had done so, this story, so far as he was concerned, would have come to an end.

But he didn't.

## CHAPTER IX.

JEREMIAH'S hired mule, finding himself on a railroad track, directly in the way of an approaching train, had, suddenly taken it into his stupid, self-willed head not to budge.

Jeremiah had broken his umbrella banging it over the mule's ribs in a vain attempt to make him go forward or back, and all the time the train was getting nearer.

It was now within a hundred feet or less, and the engineer had just let out a final shriek of warning.

"Bress me ef I'se gwine to stay yer an' git killed jis' to' dat critter's obstinacy," muttered Jeremiah. "Ef he wanter stay an' git runned ober by de kyars, he am welkim, but I'se gwine to dus."

Then he threw up one leg, slid off the mule's back, and put for the side of the road.

He might lose that five dollar mule, but he

wasn't going to be included in the wreck if he knew himself.

"Dat am jis' like a mule," he remarked disgustedly. "Dey habn't any mo' sense dan—dan a—dan a muel, dat's what dey habn't—fo' de lan' sakes!"

What had caused this final and very sudden exclamation?

The train had just gone by with a whizz and a whirr, and was beginning to be lost in the distance.

The mule. Oh, where was he?

It wasn't necessary to ask the winds or any of the elements this simple question.

Jeremiah's own senses gave the reply as soon as the question was put.

That mule was by no means a mangled and bleeding mass of hash.

In fact he hadn't been injured in the least.

The moment Jeremiah had left his back he had whisked about and gone up the road, the way he had come, with the speed of the wind.

Now that the train had gone by, Jeremiah's view was unobstructed, and he saw that mule putting towards home at the top of his gait.

For a moment that poor coon was speechless.

"Dere goes my fl' dollahs!" he finally remarked. "Dat mule am as cute as the debbil hisself."

Jeremiah yelled after that mule, but he might have saved his breath for all the effect it had.

Away went that self-willed mule toward home, and the longer Jeremiah looked, the further away he got.

Finally he disappeared entirely from sight, and Jeremiah turned sadly away and resumed his journey.

"Dar goes my fl' dollahs as fas' as it kin go," he muttered. "Ef I'd knowed dat, I wouldn't er gub dat nigger mo'n a dollah an' a half."

The railroad crossing was about half way between the town he had left, and the one he was bound for, so that he still had a matter of six or seven miles to travel.

"Drat dat yer muel," he muttered, as he walked on, "ef it hadn't er been fur his cussedness, I'd be mos' to de town by dis time. Ef I wasn't a mem-bah ob de chu'ch, I'd like to swar at dat animile. Reckon he war one ob de debbil's agents, sen' f'om de pit jes' to temp' me; but I'se not gwine to be tempted by any ole fl' dollah mule, not ef I knows myse'f."

On he walked, musing on the vicissitudes of life. Sometimes the road was shady and pleasant and again it was hot and dusty, and at these latter times poor Jeremiah's soul was very much tried.

"Gorry! I jes' wish I hadn't been sich a fool as to go to de meetin' agin de boss' o'dahs," he muttered, wiping the sweat from his brow. "Ef I'd done as de boss say, I wouldn't be trab'lin' dis terrible road jes' like a tramp."

Later on, however, when it was cool and shady, he sat on a stump and remarked, independently:

"H'm! a heap I ear 'bout Sam Smah't or de hull lot ob 'em! Reckin I'se habin' jes' as good fun as dey is. Don' tend to go back till I get good 'n' ready, an' if I wante go to pra'r meetin', I'se gwine ebery time, an' don' yo' fo'git it."

At last he came to two roads, both leading in the same general direction so far as he could tell.

His guide had not told him about these roads, but had said that he could go right straight on to Whitneytown without missing it.

He was puzzled which road to take, for there was no guide-post, and the last house he had seen was at least half a mile back.

"Reckin dis am de right road," he muttered, after looking in vain to see if any one were coming.

Thereupon he turned down the right hand road, and kept on at a fairly good jog.

Ten minutes later he met a countryman coming along the road, and of him he inquired if he were on the right road.

"Du yu wante go to Whitney's?" asked the man.

"Yas'r, dat am my 'tention."

"Wall, this yer rud 'll take yu thar arter a while, but yu'll hev to go 'bout four mile eout'n yer way."

"Goodness sakes alibo! Reckin' I walked nuff fo' one day a'ready."

"Did you come all way along this 'ere rud?"

"Yas'r, all de way, setteen miles."

"Wall, why in time didn't yew take the tother rud down tow the corners. That 'ud ha' fetched yu tew Whitney's in no time."

"Wall, I reckon I bettah turn back, and take de oder one now."

"Yas, yew kin dew that or yew kin cut 'cross lots an' jine the other rud jes' fore it comes tew the town."

"Go ober de fl'el's?"

"Yas, that's the shortest way."

"Bery much 'bliged. Reckin I bettah do dat," and Jeremiah and the rustic parted company.

"Keep right stret on an' yew'll come tew t'other rud," was the hayseeder's parting remark.

Jeremiah started to get over a stone wall, tumbled six or eight feet of it down and landed on top of a full-grown thistle.

He was on the other side, however, and if the owner of the wall wanted it put up again he could replace it himself.

Straight on over the fields went Jeremiah, singing camp-meeting hymne and now and then mopping his head with a big red bandanna handkerchief.

Now it so happened that in his journey across lots that coon came to a field tenanted at that moment by a rip-snorting bull of the fiercest kind.

He might not have objected to Jeremiah's presence, or even to his singing, but he did object to that big red handkerchief.

To this he entered a formal and most vigorous protest.

He put down his head, threw up his tail, uttered a terrific bellow and charged full tilt at the coon.

The latter heard him coming, thrust his red wipe into his coat-tail pocket, and put for the nearest fence.

"Fo' Gawge, I don' wante be frowed up in de a'r by dat bull fo' a cent," he remarked, as he hoofed it along in lively style.

He very quickly saw, however, that the masculine bovine beast was likely to reach the fence long before he did.

Then a lucky thought struck him.

"Gorry! I fool dat yer bull yet, see ef I don'," he chuckled.

Then he suddenly stopped, turned around, faced that angry bull and grabbed his umbrella.

The bull let out another roar and came on at full speed.

Then Jeremiah John opened that big umbrella right in the face of the rushing bull.

"Reckin dat frighten him firs' clase," muttered the coon.

There was enough left of the umbrella to spread, but the bull did not seem to mind it worth mentioning.

He came straight on, broke through the enemy's lines, otherwise the umbrella, and sent things flying.

The next thing that Jeremiah knew, he was sitting on a rock on the other side of the fence, feeling very much broken up.

The bull was looking over the fence at him, and evidently wishing he could take a second round out of his fallen foe.

"Tears to me I'se bery much demoralized," observed Jeremiah, as he looked at the wrecked umbrella, his ruined clothes, and the bull on the other side of the fence.

"Dat sing wahn't ob no 'count 't all," he continued, gazing at the ruined umbrella. "Wha' fo' folks put tings in books dat amn't so? Ef it wahn't fo' wha' I read in a book, I would 'n be cotched dis a way."

"One ob dem story books in th'se Sun'ay school lib'ry tol' all 'bout searin' 'way lions an' b'ars an' wil' bulls jes' by op'nin' a 'brella in deir faces. Dat am all rubbish. 'Tain' so 't all, an' I know it! Dat yer bull pay no mo' 'tention to dat 'brella dan ef 'twahn't dere 't all. I calls de 'tention ob de chu'ch to dat, soon as I get back dar. Dem story books don' tell de trufe, dey tells stories, reckon' dat's why dey calls 'em dat, all de time."

Then he arose and continued his tramp, the bull uttering a triumphant bellow as his late enemy retreated.

In the next field, there was a harmless, necessary cow, grazing at her leisure; but Jeremiah had had all the fun he wanted with the bovine race, and he gave that animal as wide a berth as possible.

He got into a bog by so doing, and nearly lost one of his shoes, but he finally extricated himself, and soon struck into the road.

Along in the afternoon he reached the town where Sam was going to stop, and looked around for the hotel.

He found it, but there was no Sam Smart, no Peter Pocket, no Solomon, and no wagon.

"Does yo' know whar Smah't and Comp'ny is gwine to stop in dis yer town?" he asked the clerk.

"Smart & Co? They're the peddlers, ain't they?"

"Yas'r, dem's 'um."

"Big wagon, four horses, two young fellows, little coon?"

"Yas'r, dat's de indentical team."

"They passed through here this morning, bound for the next town. They were going to stop but thought they wouldn't."

"Dey gone to de nex' town?"

"Yes."

"How far am dat?"

"Oh, about ten miles, that is, where they're going to stop is."

"Ten mile! Great glory!"



Poor Jeremiah appeared to be in bad luck this day.

He had spent five dollars on a mule to take him to this town, had lost the brute and had to walk half the distance, had been tossed by a bull, and now found that he still had ten miles more to go before catching up with the wagon.

He was tired, hungry, travel stained and cross, and now along came this cheerful bit of news.

"Don' car' of it's forty miles," he muttered. "Dey can' shake me so easy as dat, an' I'se boun' ter cotch 'em fus' or las'!"

Then he went out and hunted up an eating saloon, where for fifty cents he filled himself up to the muzzle, feeling decidedly better than when he sat down.

A shave and a wash put him even in better temper, and then as the sun began to get on the decline and the air was decidedly cooler, he concluded to resume his walk.

He had accomplished some three quarters of the distance, and was walking along a lonely very-much-deserted road, singing to himself, when suddenly, in the moonlight, he discovered three figures approaching.

As they came nearer, he perceived that they were darkies, but not at all the kind of coons that he cared to associate with.

In short, they were tramps, bold, bad, beery tramps, worse than any white specimens of that class he had ever seen.

On they edme in the moonlight, laughing and singing and raising Cain generally.

They espied Jeremiah in a jiffy and noticed that he was well dressed and probably had money in his pocket.

"Good ebenin' gem'en," said Jeremiah John, trying to pass the three unsavory-colored gentlemen.

"Don't be in a hurry, sah," said the head tramp, blocking his way. "I've got a wo'd ter say ter yo' fo' yo' go on."

"Reckon dem close fit us better dan dey do he, eh, Rastus?" observed another.

"Dem shoes am too big fo' him feet, but dey go on me fus' rate, Jeems," said the third.

"Jes' stan' still, sah, and shell out yo' money an' close," said Rastus, the raggedest coon of all.

Jeremiah realized that he was in a bad plight, but for all that he did not despair.

A sudden thought struck him, as such things usually did, and he determined to act upon it.

He would try the effect of moral suasion on these degenerate coons.

"Bredren, au yo' war' dat yo'm gwine stret ter perdition by continnerin' in yo' ebil pass?" he asked, impressively.

The darky tramps stared at him as if doubting the evidence of their senses.

"Bredren, de wraf ob de Lawd am an awful ting ter imb fall on yer. It am wuss dan a hodfull ob bricks, I tol' yo'. It am wuss dan a kick in de shins, a good sight, my bredren."

"Did'n' yo' neber stop to sink dat de way ob de transgressor am de habdes' road dat yo' eber treaded, full o' sticks an' stans an' stum'lin' blocks, hey, bredren?"

"Don' yo' know dat it am bettah to be good dan to foller de debbil? Wall, I jes' tol' yo' it war, eb'ry time, an' I kin prove it to you' sass'factum, ef yo'll listen."

"Bredren, youse all sinnahs—sinnahs ob de wifes' kin—roarin' lions goin' 'bout to 'stroy de children ob light. Dis yer 'easion am de bes' one dere is to tell yo' ob yo' sins. Bredren, de meetin' am open, an' yo' is all free ter 'less yo' sins. Don' wait till de lebenf hour, fo' dat'll be too late, but jes' come dis yer minnit to de frone, an' 'less wha' mis'able wretches yo' is."

That was a novel idea of Jeremiah's to start a prayer meeting right in the middle of the road, but he was just full of such things.

The coons, like all darkies, were very impressionable, and when Jeremiah began to exhort they were quickly moved.

"De wheel ob time am movin' on, brudders. Look out fo' yo'self dat it don' scrush yo' all ter Rhybits when it cotch yo'. Keep ahead ob de wheel, don' hang behin' an' let de debbil snatch yo', kase yo'm behin' de times. Git right up an' git, bredren, an' shake de nonseuse out'n ol' Satan!"

"De glory ob de Lawd am a-comin' down pow'ful on dem dat beliebe. Don' yo' get lef' bredren, but jes' open yo' hafts an' get yo'self chock full ob de glory. De adversary needn' come foolin' round yer if yo' get yo'self full ob glory, bredren, but if yo' don' he's boun' ter cotch yo' shuah. Bressed be de Lawd, bredren! Glory hail n'yer!"

By this time Jeremiah John had got those three tramp coons very much excited.

They were all kneeling in the road, ringing their hands sobbing and rocking their bodies to and fro, uttering now and then some fervent ejacula-

tion. Jeremiah sang and they all joined in, he prayed and they put in the amens at every third word, he exhorted and they got chuck full of enthusiasm.

We are afraid, however, that there was less of a desire, on Jeremiah's part, to save souls, than to save his clothes and money, for he was thinking all the time of how he was going to sneak away when he had gotten his congregation of three sufficiently worked up.

It was very funny to see those ragged, dirty coon tramps on their narrow bones in the dust, with that big moke standing over them, and talking as if he were wound up to run till morning.

The meeting was going on very successfully, and Jeremiah thought he might soon be able to ask for a collection, when a new-comer arrived.

This was a regular wickedest man sort of coon, a backslider and a scoffer, a fellow who had tumbled from grace, and who would rather go fishing any day than go to meeting.

He was a tramp like the rest, but was blacker, dirtier, lazier, more ragged, and beerier than the whole lot.

He was the one black sheep in the flock, the discordant element, the ringleader in mischief, a holy terror, in fact, and a bad man from Wayback.

He came slouching up, saw what was going on, threw his battered hat on the ground, and exclaimed:

"What yer doin' yer in the road, 'Rastus? Ain' yo' got no spect fo' yo'se'f, Jeems? John Henry, ef yo' don' git up outin de dust, I done wahm yo' jacket fo' yo'. What am all dis? A prar meetin'?"

Wall, it am 'journed."

The backslider had the floor, and he held it.

"Rastus, Jeems, and John Henry forgot all about their sins, jumped to their feet, and broke up the meeting."

"Who am dis fellah, h'm?" asked the new comer.

"Pears ter me he am dress' bettah dan we wus. Reekin he make him libin' outen prar meetins, while we un's starbe. Les' go froo um."

He already had Jeremiah by the collar, and the poor coon hadn't the ghost of a chance.

"Stah' a prar meetin' in de road, did yer?" continued the wicked sinner. "Hab yo' got a call to preach?"

Reekin yo'm a fraud. Yo'm no good, brudder. Rastus, Jeems, John Henry, come yer."

The three tramps obeyed and poor Jeremiah John Joseph was thrown down and stripped to the skin by those robber mokes.

His checked suit, his money, his boots, his hat, and even his underclothes and socks were taken.

Then, that he might not be condemned to lead the life of a wild man of the woods, those nigs supplied him with trousers, coat, shirt, hat and shoes, all of the shabbiest kind, however.

His hat was like a leaky roof, his coat was a sieve, his trousers were patched and darned till the original pattern was lost sight of, and his shoes were shoes in name only.

He was a wretched-looking object when they got through with him, and nobody would have taken him for the dandy coon who used to blow the bugle on top of the big wagon of Smart & Co.

The tramps left him in the middle of the road and went on, poor Jeremiah feeling as though he had lost all his friends.

Meanwhile, Sam Smart and his retinue had arrived in town, and at this very moment our hero was holding forth from the rear of his wagon, to a large and enthusiastic audience.

"Now, then, ladies and gents, young men, old men, babies, dudes and dogs, I have here the handiest little article ever introduced into a household, the patent illuminated match safe."

"Just the thing for you, boys, when you come home late, want to find a match, fall over coal scuttles, bump your heads against open doors which somebody has kindly left for you to run into, step on the poker, tumble over the cradle, and use sulphurous language, all in your endeavor to find a match."

"Here you are, girls. Just what you want, too. You know you turn on the gas when you hear the bell ring, and then go hunting all over the house, in the sink, under the bed, in the wood box, anywhere, for a match, and all the time the gas is escaping, and when you do light a match you think the house is on fire."

"Buy our new patent back action, double reflecting, self-illuminating match-box, helps you to find a match in the dark and saves broken bones, sour tempers and cross fits, never gives you away and is always handy."

"Only five cents, and a box of snap-and-bang, kill-me-quick parlor matches thrown in. Buy one of these safes and you'll never regret it. Shows plainly in the darkest night, you can't miss it, a tipsy man can't find it, and lots of suffering can be saved."

"Also our patent reversible ash receiver, can be used for a foot-stool, warming-pan, sofa cushion, horse block, coal scuttle, or ash box, and all for the very low price of twenty five cents, made of the

very best materials, and a written guarantee given with each article."

"Try 'em before you buy 'em, don't put your money on what you don't know is good. Talk is cheap, but if you don't find this the best little article you ever saw I'll be very much surprised."

"It takes a good deal to surprise me in these days of improvement in the arts and sciences, and I'll sing you a little song about it, just to show you how, no matter what happens, I wouldn't be surprised."

Then Peter Pocket thumped his banjo and Sam got rid of the following:

"If I saw a one-legged man playing base ball,  
Or a leather-lunged baby who never would squall,  
See a red-headed girl and not see a white horse,  
Take chin from a dude as a matter of course,  
If they put base ball pitchers all up in leather,  
And tell ten days off the state of the weather,  
I wouldn't be surprised."

"We may see the day when the women will vote,  
And opera singers never have a sore throat,  
When public officials don't steal all your cash,  
When you don't see, each day, some bank go to smash,  
When doctors agree and the lawyers grow poor—  
If all this came about, not speaking of more,  
I wouldn't be surprised."

"If never an alderman collared the boodle,  
If the crowned heads of Europe all sang Yankee Doodle,  
If mothers-in-law ceased to trouble and worry,  
And Yankees stop bolting their grub in a hurry,  
If trains ran on time and nothing to pay,  
And every man make twenty dollars a day,  
I wouldn't be surprised."

The crowd laughed and yelled and called for more, but Sam went right on selling goods, and had started a lot of mouse-traps at a nickel apiece, when a ragged, very much demoralized moke suddenly came rushing up and cried out:

"Fo' de lawd's sake, boss, sabe me, an' I'll neber g'way again."

The distressed looking moke was Jeremiah.

"Hallo. You back again?" said Sam.

"Yas'r, an' I'se done beat out, but ef yo' took me back dis time I neber do nuffin' again."

"I wouldn't be surprised," said Sam.

"Den yo' won' let desher'f took me up?"

"What's the sheriff going to take you up for?"

"Fase he says I'se a tramp."

"Well, you look like one, but that's all right. Stay here till we shut up, and I'll take you along."

That satisfied Jeremiah, and he sat on the wagon till Sam was ready.

"If you take him back," observed Peter, "you'll have just the same trouble as before, and have to bounce him again."

"I wouldn't be surprised," said Sam.

## CHAPTER X.

On the following day Smart & Co. left town, taking Jeremiah with them, that troublesome coon having promised to behave himself in future.

Things went along as smooth as lard for a week or ten days, the young peddlers traveling from place to place and making lots of money.

Jeremiah John had been to no prayer-meetings, partly because Sam kept a good watch on him, and also for the reason that there were none to attend.

Finally one day they drove into a big town with a great flourish of trumpets, and Sam, standing on the seat, dressed in a dizzy checked suit, called out:

"Friends and fellow citizens, I am the great Sam Smart, the sauciest boy peddler in the whole country, and the whitest one to boot, and what I say you can believe."

"This isn't a second-class variety show, but a bang-up, above-proof, non-combustible, gilt-edged, copper-bottomed, steel-riveted, fast-sailing, thoroughbred travelling emporium, and what you buy of me is warranted fast colors, no shrinkage, bona fide and exactly as represented, money refunded in case the weather proves stormy."

"Before every sale, which takes place this evening, in the public square, we give a prize-package, all-star, sugar-coated variety entertainment, in which will appear King Solomon, the funniest moko alive, Moses, the canine wonder, Peter Pocket, serio-comic, myself, the greatest topical singer of any age, mine is just twenty-one, and Jeremiah John Joseph Smithioni, the celebrated cornet virtuoso from the Paris conservatory—a long way from it, four thousand miles, in fact."

"No resurrected witticisms, no antediluvian gags, no old jokes, but everything new and up to the times, still damp from the press and innocent of finger marks, just the sort of show to please the people and make them want to come again. The more you come the more you want to, and our sale will speak for itself."

"Everything from the four corners, top, bottom, sides, interior, upper and under crust of the earth will be found for sale, and if we haven't got what



you want we'll order it and have it sent to your address.

"Here you will find everything from a pair of socks to an ulster, from a toothpick to a coffin. Our coffins give universal satisfaction, people using them never want any other. Second-hand ones a specialty, also repairing done in this line, satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

"Gold rings, jewelry, knives, forks, spades, clubs, hearts or diamonds, trumps or odd suits, pokers, faros or other games, umbrellas, salt cellars, wringers and Singer's, also Wheeler and Wilson's or any other kind, bought, sold and exchanged; come and judge for yourself. Excuse my talking so fast, I bit my tongue this morning and it

"Yessir, comin' dis minnit," answered that young chunk of ebony.

"Where's your father?"

"Spec he's somewhars round yer, sah."

"Well, he isn't."

"Am he froo his suppah, sah?"

"See here, you know where he is well enough," said Sam, taking that lively moke by the ear, "and I want you to tell me."

"'Deed I don', Marse Sam, really—fo' truly I don'; take my oaf I hain' got no idee whar he am," pleaded Solomon, squirming under Sam's vigorous treatment.

"Honest Injun?"

off to meetings without leave," said Sam to Peter. "He has his Sundays to himself, and that ought to be enough."

"Going to break him of it, eh?" said Peter, with a laugh.

"Yes."

"You'll have to break his neck first."

"Well, then, I'll discharge him and get a nigger that don't go to meetings."

"Yes, and have him steal everything he can lay hands on. Jeremiah is honest, at all events."

"Yes, but deucedly unreliable. If I keep him I'm going to break him of that habit of his."

"It's a great nuisance, I admit," said Peter.



That coon in his old dress and sunbonnet looked as funny as a pig on skates. All hands roared, and that made him as ashamed as could be. "Been to prayer-meeting again, have you?" asked Sam.

runs both ways. Jeremiah John, blow the bugle!" Jeremiah tooted his horn till his fat cheeks seemed ready to burst, and then Sam sang a song, Solomon scattered the dodgers like autumn leaves, Peter beat the drum and Moses barked himself hoarse.

After this Sam gathered up the ribbons and drove to the hotel, where the horses were put up, and all hands amused themselves till dinner time.

Country cooking hadn't yet killed Sam, by a big majority, and he was fatter, saucier, handsomer and jollier than ever, while Peter made the very best of side partners.

Moses, that comical trick dog, was as funny as ever and better looking; and as for Solomon, he grew livelier every day, and proved as much a treasure as his piously-inclined father proved a nuisance.

Sam and Peter were pretty busy that afternoon, looking over and assorting a lot of new goods just arrived, practicing new funny business, teaching Moses new tricks, and otherwise employing themselves.

Consequently, Sam forgot to keep his eye on Jeremiah, and just after supper, in getting to which meal both Sam and Peter were late, that irresponsible ducky was found missing.

Sam came out from supper, went around to the barn, looked in at the kitchen, nosed around the stables, but saw nothing of Jeremiah.

Solomon was getting out the harness, but no other coon was in sight.

"Solomon!" called Sam, sharply.

"Yas'r, cross my froat, wisher may die, sacred wo'd an' honah I don', Marse Sam!"

"Well, why don't you watch him, then? You know he sneaks off to prayer-meeting every chance he gets, and leaves us in a hole."

"It am a bery bad habit, Marse Sam," said Solomon, with a grin.

"It's got to be stopped, Solomon."

"Spec it hab, sah. Dat fader ob mine am bery shif'less."

"Well, why in time don't you prevent his going away, then?" cried Sam, angrily. "Why don't you watch him?"

"Lor' sakes, boss, I kean't keep my eyes on him ebery minnit. Fader, he come out an' he say, 'H'yar, yo' Solomon, hurry up an' get down dat habness, so's de waggin kin be hitched up.' Den I goes and gits de habness, an' de nex' minnit, jes' when my back am turned, dat no 'count niggah he hab sneaked away."

Sam laughed, thought a few moments and said:

"You didn't hear him talk about going to meet-

ing?"

"No, sah, he know too much fo' dat—he know I done tol' on him ef he do."

"Is this one of the regular nights?"

"Donno when dey hab um in dis town, sah. Ef I did, I done tol' yo'."

Sam found out from some of the servants in the hotel, however, that there was a meeting that night in a colored church about two miles away, and that a load of coons had gone over just after supper.

"We've got to break him of that habit of running

"Can't we get somebody to waylay him as we did before?"

"Spend five dollars on sausages to feed to the village dogs?" snorted Sam. "Not much. That coon isn't worth it."

"I'll get the job done for less."

"All right; go ahead."

Peter picked up three or four big darkies who were loafing around the hotel, described Jeremiah to them, and then unfolded his plans.

"I want you to waylay that coon," he said, "when he's coming from meeting. Take all his things off and send him home."

"Sen' him home in him skin, boss?" asked one of the coons, opening his eyes.

"Well, not so bad as that, perhaps; but don't give him any more than the law allows."

"Wha' we do wif his close?"

"Send them here to the hotel to Sam Smart."

"All right, boss; wha' yo' gwine to gub we uns fo' de job?"

"I'll give you a quarter apiece."

"An' let us hab all de fun we want out'n dat nigger?"

"Yes, only don't hurt him."

"No, sah, we don' do dat, we on'y scar' de liber out'n um."

"That's it."

"Yo' pay us now, boss?" asked the leader.

"No, sir!" said Peter, very decidedly. "You do the job and then I'll pay you."

"A' right, boss, we do um up brown."



Peter knew too much to pay those coons in advance.

The nigs agreed to perform their work satisfactorily, and then Peter went off to help hitch up and drive the wagon out into the square.

It was growing dark when Sam drove round, and he soon collected a crowd by his free show.

Solomon danced, played the banjo, and did his contortion act, Peter put his trick dog through his exercises, Sam sang, Solomon played the cornet, and Sam did a lot of juggling tricks and then sang again, by which time the crowd was in a pretty good humor and ready for anything.

"Peter, why am I like a porous plaster, an artist, and a good chimney?" asked Sam.

"Because you draw well," returned Peter.

"What do I draw, Peter?"

"Crowds like this one."

"Solomon, what is the chief end of man?"

"De end wid de feet on, I specs. It's de bigges' in my case, I reckon."

"No, sir, it's the head, for that contains the understanding."

"No, sah, yo'm dead wrong. De feet am de undahstan'in' ebery time."

"What does more harm than a thunderbolt?"

"Two ob dem, I spec."

"How much is two and two?"

"Twenty-two. Any fool knows dat."

"That's how you came to guess it, I reckon."

"Yas'r; dey feeds de pigs on ches'nuts whar I come f'om."

"That's what makes you so fat, I guess."

"I'll give you one," said Peter.

"Very well, sir. What is it?"

"Why is a mushroom like a wheelbarrow?"

"I'm sure I can see no points of resemblance between the two articles."

"Why, they're both very nice things to stumble across. You never know whether they're going to hurt you till you find yourself down."

"Now, then, brethren," said Sam, "I have here the cheapest article on the market, not too cheap, but just cheap enough, and that reminds me of a song:

"Don't reckon your chickens before they are hatched,  
When your horse is stolen, keep the door latched,  
Don't wait till you're old before going to school,  
Don't monkey around the hind legs of a mule,  
Don't take any stock in the talk of a fool,  
It's too cheap."

"Don't sign another man's name to a check,  
Don't knock a man down and walk on his neck  
Don't run up big bills and then go all to smash,  
Or chop little dogs' tails along with your hash,  
Don't spend any money on counterfeit cash,  
It's too cheap."

There's no trouble so bad but 'twill come to an end,  
For a brave, cheerful heart's the best kind of a friend,  
So don't go on fretting your whole life away,  
But when the sun's shining, go in and make hay,  
And don't spend on rum all you make in a day,  
It's too cheap."

After this Sam got down to business and rattled off one line of goods after another, so that by the time the crowd began to go home he and Peter were well satisfied with their night's work, and adjourned to the hotel in the best of spirits, to have a quiet smoke before going to roost.

Jeremiah John had, meanwhile, been attending meeting in the colored church and had started homeward.

The road was rather lonely, and he beguiled the way by singing hymns in an unmelodious voice.

Suddenly, when he least expected it, four darkies sprang out and grabbed him, holding him as in a vise.

"Wha' yo' want, ge'men?" he asked, very much frightened.

"Dem good close yo' got on an' all yo' money."

"Ge'men, am yo' war' ob de monstrosity ob dis persee-lin'?" asked the scared coon. "Don' yo' know dat yo'm all sinnahs, dat de pass yo'm foller-in' leads to de bottomless pit? Oh, bredren, listen to de voice ob—"

"Yo' kean't come no pra'r meetin' bizness on us, Mistah Jeremiah, so yo'd better keep yo' mouf shut."

"Yas'r, dat don' go down wid us, so jes' shell out."

Jeremiah had fancied that he could get up an impromptu prayer-meeting, right here in the road, as he had once done with the three tramps, and so escape.

This time, however, it wouldn't work.

"Jes' yo' lemme alone, nigger," he cried, as the leader began to strip off his coat. "I done tell de boss ef yo' don', yo' see."

"De boss be blamed. He isn't yer, an' we wouldn't car' ef he war."

Then those coons deprived their victim of every stitch of clothing, leaving him without so much as a paper collar or a pair of shoestrings.

The air was tolerable cold, and poor Jeremiah began to shiver.

"Ain' yo' gwine to leabe me nuffin 'tall?" he blubbered.

"Yas'r, we gib yo' dis," and the boss coon chucked a bundle at him.

"Jes' yo' go back to Sam Smaht, an' tell him all 'bout it," said another, "an' don' yo' dar' ter come foolin' roun' our meetin' house no mo'."

"Ef yo' do, yo' get skinned, nigger, an' don' yo' fo'get it."

"Gib our 'specs to Mistah Smaht, an' tell him we gib yo' a llekin' de nex' time we cotch yo'."

"Good-night, Brudder Smiff. Hope yo' won cotch cold."

Then those nigs left, and Jeremiah proceeded to look into the bundle they had given him.

He supposed it to contain some old clothes, with which he might return to the hotel.

It did contain old clothes, sure enough.

They were not the kind that he was accustomed to wear, however.

An old calico dress and a battered bonnet comprised the entire contents of the bundle.

"De Lawd sabe us!" ejaculated Jeremiah; "I can' w'ar dem t'ings nohow."

It was those or nothing, however.

"De idee ob a membah ob de chu'ch gwine froo de streets in dem t'ings!"

It did seem hard, but there was no help for it.

"All de deacons shah me out ef dey see me—woo-oo-oh-rrr!"

The cold began to strike in, and he was shivering like a man in a fit.

"Reckin' I hab to put dese on or go wifout," he muttered, shaking with the cold.

Then he got into the thin calico dress, which afforded him but little warmth, and put on the bonnet.

The latter article was of the Shaker variety, as Jeremiah was himself, just then.

An old calico dress and a big sunbonnet is hardly the uniform for a consequential ducky to wear, but Jeremiah had nothing else.

The wind blew around his bare legs, up and down his back, and played over his manly bosom, much to his discomfort.

"Woo-ooo-oo! ain' it col'." Spec' I cotch my deff?"

Then he wrapped the dress about him and started off toward the hotel on a dead run.

Now and then the dress would get away from him, flutter in the wind, and expose his nakedness to the cold, when he would gather it around him again and make a fresh start.

He couldn't keep warm even by running, and when he reached the hotel he was blue with the cold.

There was no way of getting to his room, except by going through the office, and he knew that that was full, by the sound of laughing and talking which came therefrom.

"Spec' de boss am dere, wif de res' ob dem loafahs," he mused. "Oh, deah, I see a dreffully 'bused nigger."

However, there was no help for it, and he determined to get through without being seen, if possible.

"Wouldn' hab de boss see me rigged up dis way fo' nuffin'," he muttered, as he walked toward the door.

He had his hand on the knob, and was about to turn it softly, when somebody did it for him.

The door flew open and Jeremiah went flying into the office at lightning speed.

Right into the middle of the room he went, among a crowd of loungers.

There were Sam Smart, Peter Pocket, Solomon, two or three dudes, the clerk, the landlord, the bell-boy, and a couple of old grangers.

They were all smoking or engaged in conversation, but Jeremiah's sudden appearance put a stop to everything.

There he stood in the middle of the floor, barefooted, a big sunbonnet on his head, and an old calico dress covering his manly form.

"Hallo, who owes their wash bill?" cried out the clerk. "Here's the woman come to collect it."

Jeremiah tried to get out by the other door, but the gang stopped him.

"Blessed if it isn't Jeremiah John Joseph and all the rest of him!" sang out Sam.

"Just turned up from prayer-meeting with a change of raiment, if not a change of heart!" added Peter.

"Bress my gizzard, ef it ain' fader!" ejaculated Solomon.

That coon in his old dress and sunbonnet looked as funny as a pig on skates.

All hands roared, and that made him as ashamed as could be.

"Been to prayer-meeting again, have you?" asked Sam.

"Been mashing another widow and got the coons jealous?" cried Peter.

"Never can get enough, can you?"

"Where did you catch onto the Mother Hubbard?"

"Ain' been ter meetin' 'tall," growled that shame-faced coon, chucking the shaker to the floor.

"Haven't, eh?"

"No, sah; been waylaid by fo'teen tramps, reg'lar highway robbahs, took all my close, all my money, everyting, an' lef' me dese ol' tings. Nice way fo' a membah ob de chu'ch to come home, ain' it? Burnin' shame, dat's what it am."

"You were waylaid by highwaymen, were you?"

"Yas'r, fo'teen ob 'em, an' all wif pistols an' knives an' clubs. Dey jes' took eberyting I had."

"Are you sure there were fourteen of the rascals?" asked Sam, as if he believed the whole story.

"Yas'r, dey was fo'teen ob 'em, kase I counted, an' dey all had blunderbasters and bowie knives, an' razors an' clubs, an' dey took ebery bressed cent I had."

"Where was this?"

"Jes' outside ob town."

"H'm. How came you to go away in the first place? Didn't I tell you not to go to prayer-meetings on week-day nights?"

"Ain' been to pra'r-meetin', boss, sw'ar to goodness I ain'."

"No?"

"No, sah, ain' been wifin two mile ob a chu'ch dis ebenin'."

"Where were you, then?"

"Wall, yo' see, boss, I heard, early dis ebenin', dat my secon' cousin on my madder's side was libin' in dis town, an' dat he war dyin' an' wanted ter see me drefful bad."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yas'r, he war awful sick, an' he heard dat I war in de place an' sen' fo' me in a tearin' hurry."

"Then you didn't go to prayer-meeting?" asked Sam again, enjoying the fun of hearing that pious coon lie like the Old Seratch.

"No, sah, didn' go near um, didn' know dey was one, stayed by de bedside ob dat po' dyin' man all de ebenin'."

"Did he die?"

"Oh, yas, he die, an' lef' me his bressin' an' fo'ty dollahs, an' den when I was comin' home dem robbahs sat on me an' took ebery bressed cent I hab an' all my close, too."

"So he's dead, eh?"

"Yas'r, dead, po' man," and Jeremiah began to blubber.

"And you didn't go to prayer-meeting?"

"No, sah, hadn't time to go to meetin'."

"And the man is dead?"

"Yas'r. I done tol' you dat a couple o' times."

"Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac Moses Glory Hallelujah Smith, you're the biggest liar I ever saw," cried Sam, sternly.

"Wha' dat, boss?" cried Jeremiah, turning three shades lighter.

"You're an infernal liar, you have been to prayer-meeting. You haven't any second cousin in this town, he isn't dead, and the four fellows who took away your clothes were hired by Peter to do the job to punish you for running away. Now git!"

With that Sam brought the toe of his boot in violent juxtaposition with Jeremiah's rear, and repeated the action thrice.

At every kick the poor moke jumped, for, be it remembered, he had nothing on him except a very thin calico dress, and Sam toed the mark, literally, every time.

"Git!" said Sam.

"Dust!" remarked Peter.

Both commands were enforced by more kicks. Jeremiah got.

He had not been gone many moments, when in came the four coons, with Jeremiah's clothes.

"Dere yo' am, boss. Reekin' we made a putty good job ob it, h'm?" said the leader.

"First-rate, and here's your money," and Peter gave them a quarter each all round.

"Yo' would'n' min' lettin' me hab de dress an' de bonnet in de mornin', would yo', boss? It blong ter my ol' woman."

"Come and get 'em," laughed Peter, and then the mokes departed and all hands had another laugh over the affair.

In the morning Jeremiah came down looking as independent as a turkey cock, and Sam said to him:

"Jeremiah John, I played a trick on you last night, to break you of going away without leave. Every time you do it after this I'm going to serve you the same way, so look out for yourself."

"Yas'r," said Jeremiah, coming down several pegs.

"See that you do, then," said Sam.

"Do you think you've cured him?" asked Peter, when Jeremiah had gone away.

"I hope so."

"I'll be willing to bet you haven't."

"Well, we'll see," said Sam.

And they did see.



CHAPTER XL

For some little time after Sam's hint to Jeremiah, that pious coon behaved himself first rate, and attended strictly to business.

It was too late for the camp-meeting season, but there were revivals and protracted meetings and love feasts and celebrations of all sorts to be looked out for, so that there was no knowing when Jeremiah might break the rules again and sneak off of a night.

Sure enough, it was not long before the piously-inclined coon slipped away one cool evening, evading the vigilance of Sam, Peter and Solomon, and went to a prayer-meeting.

Sam was as mad as a plumber in summer, for he

"I'm not going to spend any more money on him. He isn't worth it."

"I'll git up a cheap snap and one that won't cost anything."

"All right."

There happened to be stopping at the same hotel, three or four drummers for different houses, and Sam had struck up an acquaintance with them.

He did not interfere with their business in the town, for he bought a good bill of goods of each, ordering the things sent on to the next town.

The drummers thought Sam and Peter first rate fellows, had enjoyed the show and were glad to see that they were doing a good business.

and then Sam drove out into the square, and started in on a rattling good business.

First all hands gave an overture. Sam playing the cornet, Solomon the cymbals and Peter the big drum, the dog Moses putting in a bark now and then by way of accompaniment.

Then Sam played the banjo, while Peter sang, and after that Peter and Moses amused the crowd.

"Now, then, fellow tax-payers," called out Sam in a loud voice, "get your small change ready, for you will need it. Don't think I intend to take up a collection, for I don't. I only want you to buy this cheap little article—Sam Smart's patent illuminated metal numbers—to stick on your doors.



Suddenly, right in the midst of the coon's song, there arose from behind six grave-stones six sheeted specters, all pointing their fingers toward Jeremiah. "Fo' de lan' ob glory! Look at dem ghosteses!" muttered Jeremiah. "Fo' Heaben's sake, wha' I done ter see dem?"

had prided himself on being able to keep a good watch on that coon.

He had promised Solomon a dollar every time he prevented his father from going away, and the small coon was mad to think he had not been able to earn it.

Peter was mad because, when Jeremiah was not around, he had to toot on the bugle and do extra acts to keep the crowd amused.

"This sort of thing has got to be stopped," said Sam, when they found that Jeremiah John was not to be found.

"I think I've heard you say that before," remarked Peter with a chuckle.

"We must break him of this habit of running off whenever he chooses, if we break his neck."

"Likewise have you made that remark also," observed Peter.

"Something must be done to cure him of this habit."

"Discharge him."

"Yes; and have him come back the next day."

"Discharge him again."

"He'll follow us."

"Discharge him again."

"Oh, he's like a gun, every discharge makes him worse."

"Then fire him."

"That's the same, isn't it?"

"Kick him out then."

"I've kicked till I'm tired."

"Well, suppose we work off a snap on him?"

It was just before the sale when Sam and Peter had their little confab.

Just then in came Jack Jolly, a drummer for a notions house, and Ben Blunt, who carried a line of drugs.

"Hallo, boys," said Peter. "I was just thinking of you. Will you join us in a little racket?"

"The idea of asking a drummer to go on a little racket," said Ben. "Well, I should gurgle."

"You've seen our big coon, haven't you?"

"Yes, and think him very funny."

"So do we, when he sticks to business, but just now he's run away to prayer-meeting, and that bothers us."

"Can't you stop him?"

"If you can, I'll give you ten dollars," said Sam.

"Do you know where he's gone?"

"Out of town a way. I guess."

"Well, get your sale through with early, and then all hands of us can waylay him, and scare the life out of him."

"I know where the nigger church is," said Jack.

"You have to pass a grave-yard, right close to the road, in going to it."

"We'll work the ghost racket on him," said Peter. "Sheets are cheap."

"Just the thing," answered Sam. "We musn't have any old played out ghost snap, though. I'll give you some new ideas in that line."

"Good enough."

The other two drummers were let into the snap.

"These enable you to see where you live on the darkest night, and no matter how many glasses of lemonade you've been taking, no mistakes made, no trying to get into the wrong house when you use this article."

"Any combination of figures furnished, all supplied with steel rivets, can be fastened on any door, ten cents a figure, three for a quarter, and any combination supplied; can be seen in the darkest night, shines like a coon's heel, and never loses its luster."

"If you live at No. 123 any street, I furnish you with the three figures, with full directions for putting on, and there you are—you always know where you live, and can't make any mistakes. Invaluable for doctors, young men going home late at night, or fellows looking for their girl's houses."

"Here you are, our patent illuminated house numbers, ten cents a figure or three for a quarter, as cheap as dirt, and the finest invention of the age, indorsed by press, clergy and public."

"Here you have the handiest thing ever known and all for a song; the song is generally 'We Won't Go Home Till Morning,' or 'Johnny Fill Up the Bowl,' or occasionally, 'Put His Little Socks Away,' or sometimes, 'Father Come Home,' but it's a song all the same."

"Three figures, assorted, and a corkscrew, bottle of soda water or bar of soap thrown in. Can't I induce any one to buy? No? Then this must be a very nice crowd, all hands go to bed early and never forget where they live."



"Well, how's this, then? Here you have my patent corn salve and bunion eradicator. Old Bunyan used it himself when he wrote his Pilgrim's Progress. Ten cents a bottle and a pair of suspenders thrown in. Why are two men hanging like a useful article of clothing? Because they are a pair of suspenders. Next! Who'll have a bottle? Thank you, sir; you can have it for nothing."

"I always give my first customer a reward of merit. Who'll take the next? You, sir? Thank you, sir. Peter, give him a neck-tie to go with his suspenders. When a man is hanged he always has a neck tie. Who's next?"

"You can't do better than to buy this corn cure, gents. It knocks spots out of the toughest corns. Acknowledge the corn, now, and buy a bottle. Thank you, sir. Peter, fetch out a Waterbury watch. All gone? Well, an alarm clock will do as well. We're giving things away to-night."

"There was a young lady named Topping,  
Who always admired going shopping,  
She was great on the mash,  
But when you called 'Cash!'  
She'd go out of the store a-hopping."

"That's the kind of crowd I've got. Come, neighbors, step up and buy something, if it's only a spool of thread. I've got to make my board bill before I shut up to-night, so plank down, for I can't be a shutter till I raise my board, wood you? I opine knot. Peter, fetch out your grand piano and give us an air or two. That 'ere will do, I guess."

Then Peter fetched out his banjo, sat down on a three-legged stool, rattled away for a few minutes, and then burst forth into melody, as follows:

"Oh, once I loved a lovely gal, I met her in the lane;  
Her heart was true, her eyes were blue,  
Her name was Susan Jane.  
She said I was a nice young man, and hoped I'd got  
the rocks,  
But the very next day she vanished away,  
And I had to pawn my socks."

"She stole my heart, likewise my cash,  
This naughty Susan Jane.  
I sent her a letter, it didn't get her,  
She'd faded from the lane.  
So, boys, beware of all the girls, or flirting in the  
lane;  
I've been caught once, I won't be a dunce,  
For I won't be sold again."

Then Sam sang something, Solomon turned flip-flaps, and Peter did a juggling act, by which time Sam got at the gang again and succeeded in waxing some cash out of the spectators' pockets.

The sale closed early, however, and then, when the lights were put out and the wagon and nags put up, Sam and his friends started off to play their little racket on Jeremiah, who had not yet returned.

That coon had gone over to the prayer meeting with a big party of mokes in a wagon, and was thinking of having the biggest kind of a picnic.

He prayed, he shouted, he yelled camp-meeting songs, he exhorted, he told his experience, and was the biggest toad in the puddle.

"Frens and feller sinners," he cried, jumping up in his seat, "whar am yo' gwine when yo' leab dis earlly spere? Am yo' gwine stret up to glory to cuddle in de buzzum ob de Lawd, or am yo' gwine down ter 'tarnal misery an' stir up de flahs fo' ole Satan?"

"Reflec', brudders an' sistahs, reflec' an' make up yo' min's whar yo'm gwine to, afo' de fron' do' ob heaben am shet an' yo' hab to sneak into de back do' ob perdition, neber to git out again."

"Young man, don' yo' git ter stayin' out too late nights, playin' policy an' fillin' up on gin an' lasses, or de adversary'll come mopin' long an' run yo' in jes' like a pieceman."

"Young woman, don' yo' go to pahties an' weah ribbons an' eat chewin' gum, an' mash all de young coons an' dance all yo' preshus time away, less de ole debil come long some time an' dance yo' off to de lan' ob flah an' brimston, whar de voice ob wallin' am heard."

"Fadlers, look out fo' yo' chillun, an' don' fo' git ter look arter yo'se'f at de same time, or de do' ob heaben will be done shet an' yo'll be lef' out in de col' ready fo' de debbil to scoop yo' in."

"Mudders, don' yo' spen' too much time gaddin' roun', an' neglectin' ob yo' duties, rehashin' de lates' scandal or bitin' de backs ob yo' neighbors, lest de ol' sarpint come sneakin' long an' wrop yo' in him deadly grip."

"Jine de glorious army, marchin' ter heaben, eben ef yo' don' do nuffin' but tote de watah bucket or car'y de targets. Am yo' a sojer ob de Lawd, brudder? No? Den jine right away, or ol' Club-foot come along an' drat yo' in him army afo' yo' know it."

"Put on de knapsack ob faif, shouldah de musket ob b'leef, buckle on de sword ob 'ligion, jine de ranks an' march up to de golden gate afo' de ene-

my 'tack yo' in de r'ar an' lug yo' off to de lan' ob 'tarnal misery. Brudders, le's pray."

Jeremiah John was right in his element, like a fish in a brook, and the longer the meeting lasted the better he liked it.

There was lots of enthusiasm, plenty of singing, shouting and praying and giving of experiences, and hour after hour sneaked away without any notice being taken of their absence.

One by one, two by two and in groups the coons faded away, till at last eleven o'clock had long struck, the lamps were burning low, and only a dozen or so of the faithful remained.

"Le's conclude dis meetin' wil de sebenty-fo'fe hymn, bred'ren," said the leader at length. "De hounah am gettin' late, an' I'se got ter be up arly in de mo'nin' ter do a job ob whitewashin'."

"It am neber too late ter praise de Lawd," said Jeremiah.

"No, sah, I know dat, but I reckon de Lawd am willin' to hab a wacation 'easion'ly, an' when de lights am gwine out an' de chu'ch am gettin' col', I reckon de Lawd don' min' ef we shet up shop."

The meeting was then brought to an end, and Jeremiah looked around for his friends.

There was no wagon, no familiar faces, and Jeremiah began to feel lonesome.

"Anybody gwine up to town?" he remarked, as he stood on the steps and saw one after another going off in the opposite direction.

"Does yo' all lib roun' yer?" he asked again, as more went away.

"Whar's yo' gwine, brudder?" asked one big wench.

"Back to de hotel whar my boss am."

"Lor' bress yo', we uns don' lib dat a way. De waggin done went dar long ago."

"Don' nobody lib up my way?" asked Jeremiah, lugubriously.

"No, they all live in the other direction."

At last they had all departed, the church was shut up, and Jeremiah was left alone.

There was nothing for it but to walk back to the hotel, a good two miles, and by a lonesome road.

"Pears ter me if dem fellers had a wanted ter show a Christine sperrit, dey'd a tol' me dey was gwine," muttered Jeremiah, as he started to hoof it.

The night was cold and cloudy, the moon now and then shining around the edge of a cloud, and then sneaking back again.

The wind whistled through the leafless trees, and the air was anything but balmy.

A walk over a lonesome road close to the bewitching hour of midnight was not very cheerful, to say the least.

Jeremiah felt its depressing influence, and tried to shake it off.

"Reckon dey ain' nuthin' ter be skeered ob when de Lawd am on yo' side, but I wouldn' min' if I had some feller ter talk to, arter all. Kean't do all de talkin' nohow."

"Gorry! how de win' do blow froo de limbs! Dat moon ain' no use 'tall. Wish she'd eider stay in or stay out. Dis yer bobbin' back an' fo'f ain' no good. It's neider daylight nor da'k."

"Dat yer war one ob de bes' pra'r meetin's I eber tended. De sperrit ob de Lawd jes' hung 'round in chunks, an' it war edifyin' ter heah dem ol' sinners prayin'. Dat's de kin' I like."

"Don' car' ef de boss don' like my goin' ter meetin'. Reckon he ain't got no call ter interfere wif my 'ligious duties, nohow. I'll go ter meetin' jes' when I choose, so dar."

"Oh, bredren, tell me whar yo's gwine,  
Trablin' dis weary road,  
Am yo' gwine to heaben fo' ter shine,  
Trablin' dis weary road?  
Am de gospul shoes upon yo' feet,  
Trablin' dis weary road?  
Am yo' gwine fo' ter walk de golden street,  
Trablin' dis weary road?"

"Den jine de percession up to heaben,  
De glorius percession to de gates ob heaben,  
Come dis way ef yo' wantet get ter heaben,  
Trablin' dis weary road, aha!"

How the quaint music and quainter words did ring out on the night air!

Singing always put lots of punk into that coon, and he already felt as brave as an old hero of romance.

"Don' yo' put it off too long, afo' yo' die,  
Trablin' dis weary road;  
But hab a singah in de gospul pie,  
Trablin' dis weary road.  
Tell de brudders an' de sistahs fo' to jes' come along."

"Trablin' dis weary road;  
An' we'll shout, an' we'll holler de gospul song,  
Trablin' dis weary road."

"Den, chillen, come along, I'se gwine ter heaben,  
Dis ain de way dat leads to heaben,  
Ef yo' wantet he sabel, yo' must get ter heaben,  
Trablin' dis weary road."

Then Jeremiah tramped steadily along on his

own weary road, his song being carried far away on the wings of the wind.

Pretty soon he came to the grave-yard, and just then the moon came out bright and full.

"Lor' sakes! dere am a buryin' groun'. Di'n' see that when I come 'long, jus' off. Well, dead folks kean't hurt nobody, nohow."

"Oh, bredren, hahness up de ol' blin' mule,  
Trablin' dis weary—"

Jeremiah was right abreast of the grave-yard, just where it came nearest to the road.

There was only a low wall between it and the road, and anybody could jump it, though there was a ditch on the other side.

Suddenly, right in the midst of the coon's song, there arose from behind six grave-stones six sheeted specters, all pointing their fingers toward Jeremiah.

"Fo' de lan' ob glory! Look at dem ghostesses!" muttered Jeremiah. "Fo' Heaben's sake, wha' I done ter see dem?"

Suddenly the boss ghost—who was none other than Sam Smart—began to chant in a sepulchral voice, and in slow, drawling tones, the following:

"Mary—had—a—little—pup,  
All—covered—o'er—with—fleas,  
She—put—him—in—a—tub,  
And—there—she—made—him—sneeze!  
Chorus—brothers—chorus!"

Then all the other ghosts sneezed and said together:

"Rah—rah—'rah—rah—rats!"

Poor Jeremiah was terrified most to pieces, and his knees rattled a tune one against another.

Then the boss specter got off another dreadful sentence:

"Mother—may—I—go—in—to—swim?  
If—I—put—on—my—Sunday—pants?  
If—you—do—I'll—take—a—lickery—limb,  
And—wallop—you—till—you—dance.  
Now—brothers—for—the—chorus."

Then all the ghosts let themselves loose once more:

"Aina-maina-mona-mike, chestnuts!"

Jeremiah's arms, legs, head and everything were shaking as if he had a fit.

Those awful words, that horrible visitation, the dread mystery of the whole business were too much for him.

Then the moon suddenly dodged behind a black cloud, and the ghosts became more ghost-like than ever.

Once more that awe-inspiring chant arose, led by the head spook:

"Old—Mother—Hubbard—went—to—the—cupboard  
To—get—her—poor—dog—a—bone,  
But—when—she—got—there—she—lost—all—her—hair,  
And—that's—where—the—laugh—comes—in.  
Sing, brothers, sing!"

Thereupon the specters let her went for all they were worth:

"Ssst!—boom!—ah! Collar buttons!"

That bewildered coon couldn't make out any sense at all to the terrible words he heard, and that scared him worse than ever.

He flopped down on his knees, he clasped his hands, and his wool stood right up straight.

"Please, deah ghos', don' hurt me!" he wailed, while all the ghosts pointed their long, white arms at him.

"Where—are—going—my—pretty—maid?  
I'm—going—a—milkin'—an'—she—sayed,  
Can—I—go—with—you—"

"Toot-toot! ash-ah! Steamboats!" interrupted the spirits.

"Jack—and—Jill—went—up—the—hill,  
To—fetch—a—pail—of—water,  
Jack—fell—down—and—broke—"

"Rah—rah, 'rah—rah, 'rah—rah—rah, ash!" howled all the ghosts once more.

That broke poor Jeremiah John all up. He jumped to his feet, gave one howl, and started to run, missed his way and fell heels over head, slap into the ditch.

"That's enough for once," said Sam, as he pulled off his sheet, threw it over his arm, and dusted.

Peter did likewise, and then the four drummers traveled the same road.

They had lots of fun talking the snap over as they went back to the hotel.

They didn't give a second thought to the unfortunate Jeremiah, who, they supposed, would soon be along.

Jeremiah was pretty well shaken up, however, by the fright.

He had toppled over in a dead faint, being scared out of his seventeen senses by the ghosts.

While Sam, Peter and the drummers were going home laughing and chatting, he still lay in the ditch.



It was late when Sam went to bed, but it was later still when Jeremiah John put in an appearance.

He did not show up till morning, and was the worst disintegrated coon you ever saw.

His face was the color of ashes, his eyes were hollow and sunken, his lips looked like underdone beefsteaks, his hair had lost its kink, his clothes were dirty and wet, and his whole get-up was most woe-begone.

He came sauntering along just as Sam walked out upon the hotel veranda before breakfast.

The poor moke had laid in that ditch all night.

Even Sam was surprised at his wretched appearance.

now go in, wash up and get your breakfast. We leave this town by ten o'clock."

"Tank goodness fo' dat!" mused Jeremiah. "I wouldn't stay in dis yer place anoder night fo' a house an' lot in de fash'n'blest part ob it."

#### CHAPTER XII.

EVERYTHING was lovely with Smart & Co., and the goose hung proportionately high in consequence.

The firm would strike a town like a cyclone, take everything by storm and go away with lots of rocks and ready to hit another one.

Occasionally a big town, almost a city, in fact,

its declaration of independence, and was still governed by selectmen, councilmen, and all that sort of thing, and no mayor to boss it, nor any board of boodle aldermen to run away with its cash.

Drawing rein in front of the biggest hotel, Sam signaled to Jeremiah to blow a blast on his bugle.

Then when attention had been secured and Solomon was scattering the dodgers right and left, Sam arose and shouted out:

"Here we are, ladies and gents, the only and original Sam Smart from Smartville, the dandiest Yankee peddler in the business, with his team of elegant horses, his beautiful traveling chariot, his excellent company of comedians, and the finest



He stood there like a very gorgeous waz figure, his eyes closed and his tongue sticking away out and extending an invitation to all the flies in the neighborhood. "H'm! very nice case," muttered the doctor, preparing to steal away, "very nice, indeed. Don't move now, or open your eyes, till I tell you. Put out your tongue a little further, please."

"For Heaven's sake, Jeremiah John, what's the matter with you?" he asked.

"May's well tol' yo' de trufe, boss," said Jeremiah, humbly.

"Well, what is it?"

"Well, boss, I wen' to pra'r meetin' ag'in las' night, wifout axin' leave, an' when I come home I seed a ghos'."

"Oh, Jeremiah, now you're fibbing!" said Sam, with mock seriousness.

"No, I isn't, boss—'deed I isn't!" protested the coon. "I seed a ghos' rise right up out'n de

grave-yard, an' dey was a whole fambly ob oder ghosts wif him, and dey all said de mos' drefful things. Clar to goodness, boss, I jes' fainted clean dead away and fell in de ditch, an' dar I lay till mo'nin'."

"You ain't lying to me, Jeremiah?" said Sam, sternly.

"No, sah. Hope ter die ef I ain't tellin' de solyum trufe. Day was six or seven ghosts, an' dey all riz right up out ob de groun' an' p'int deir fingahs at me an' said awful t'ings, an' I jes' clean wilted—I did, an' so help me lan' ob glory, boss, I won't

neber go to anoder pra'r meetin' ag'in wifout leabe neber!"

There was no doubting his earnestness this time.

"Maybe he will keep his word," thought Sam, "for he was too scared to lie this time."

"'Deed I won't, boss, never, ef yo'll oberlook dis time," said the coon.

"All right. See that you don't," said Sam; "and

would come in their way, but Sam would hit one as hard as another, for everything was fish in his net.

The big places made him hustle a little more than usual, but he got there just the same, and maybe a little extra activity did him good.

Jeremiah was keeping pretty straight these days, and had not been to a single meeting, even on Sunday, without first asking Sam's permission.

In fact, that pious darky was getting tired of the many snaps that were played on him whenever he went away without leave, knowing, also, that they would continue, and he therefore took Sam's warning and stopped.

Sam kept introducing new features into the show, and always had novelties ready for the big towns, where the people would be apt to have heard the old gags.

Moses was taught new tricks, for he was not an old dog, and could therefore learn them; Solomon picked up a performing cat, and exhibited him to delighted audiences; there was a comical little mule which Sam himself showed off, and Jeremiah learned lots of new tunes to play on his bugle, so that altogether the show was first-class, and sure to catch the crowd.

It was getting along into the early winter, but the weather was still pleasant, with no snow, and only now and then a cold day, and so Sam concluded to keep right on and not return to the city till the bad weather obliged him to do so.

One day he entered a big, over-grown town—quite a city, in fact, although it had not yet made

and cheapest lot of goods ever thrown upon the market.

"Come and see the funniest show on the globe, and all for nothing, at eight o'clock, in the square, as everything we do is on the square. Money refunded if satisfaction isn't giv'n. No reserved seats, first come, first looked after, and no postponement on account of the weather."

"We sell everything except our customers, and at foundation prices to suit the times. One dollar's worth of our goods is worth two dollars spent on the cheap trash you get elsewhere, but come and satisfy yourselves and don't take my word for it."

"You can buy anything from a penny whistle to a team of horses, you blow your breath in the whistle, or blow your money into the horses, I'm blowed if you can't, so just be on hand and foot the bills, if you're any fist at making the dust fly; but you won't find any sand flies on us."

"Sealskin sacks going as cheap as calico wrappers, grand pianos thrown away, sewing machines sold for a song, diamond ear-rings cheaper than ever before, and as for notions, I've an ocean of 'em, and I've put 'em in motion, and make a commotion, though my brother in Goshen will sell you a lotion that'll—stuck! Well, come and buy and judge for yourselves."

Then Sam took up the ribbons, and with crackling of whips, tooting of horns, beating of drums and fluttering of dodgers, the whole equipage rattled away, and left the populace open-mouthed and staring.



"Guess that feller's tongue goes by steam, the way he talks."

"Gosh! he's a rattler from Rattletown, I reckon!"

"Did ye ever see such black niggers? Guess they must be painted."

"Beats all the trav'lin' peddlers I ever see, it does so, b'gosh!"

"I swun! if that feller don't take a lot o' money out'n this town, I'm a lyin'," declared one country-man.

"You usually are," retorted another.

Sam knew he had the people solid, but to make sure of them he drove all around town that afternoon, scattering handbills broadcast, tooting on the bugle and making speeches wherever he could gather a crowd.

In the evening, when all was lighted up, and everything ready, Sam jumped on the platform and shouted out with all the voice he had:

"Now, then, ladies, secure your seats. Men folks, you can sit on the curbstone. Excuse these lights, please. We haven't got in our new electric, incandescent, effervescent, don't-give-a-cent revolving lights yet, but I reckon we'll electrify you, all the same.

"The first spasm in our catalogue of horrors will be a song written, composed, devised, invented, patented, contrived and sung exclusively by myself, all rights reserved, copyright fully protected, all infringements duly punished to the fullest extent of the law. The full band will now let itself loose while I warble."

Peter, Solomon and Jeremiah now let themselves loose, and Sam sang, in a voice that drowned all other sounds, his very newest, latest and best ballad:

"When I see a man doing all that he can  
To grind down his friend or his neighbor,  
Who drives off the poor that comes to his door,  
And pays a little or nothing for labor;  
To the widows and orphans his heart never softens,  
And he hates all that's jolly and free,  
I don't think it's right, I'm in for a fight,  
For that isn't the style for me.

"The rich men may grumble, and ne'er take tumble  
That they do not own the whole earth,  
Other nations may vex us and wish to annex us,  
And think we're of very small worth;  
The Canadians may wish to steal all our fish,  
Or the Germans stir up a big spree,  
But I'd knock King Billy and all the rest silly,  
For that isn't the style for me."

The crowd got right onto this, and howled for more, but Sam cried out:

"No, no, fellers, give Petey a chance; he's got a new act with that trick dog of his, the thoroughbred sconer, Moses, and Solomon is eating persimmons so as to pucker up his mouth to the proper dimensions for his whistling solo, so we'll give some other fellow a chance.

"There was an old lady from France,  
Who was always dying to dance,  
But the young fellows shook her,  
And the old beaus never took her,  
And she never could get the first chance.

"That'll be the case with my partner, kind friends, so I'm going to switch off and let him show what he can do. It isn't much, but he does it first rate, you can bet your life!"

Then the show went on, and by the time the crowd had swelled to good proportions and was in a purchasing humor, Sam was ready for them.

"Here we are now, holiday presents for old and young. Here's a music box that plays one tune, for ten cents, two tunes twenty and three tunes a quarter. Have music in your family without having to step on the cat's tail, or chuck the baby down stairs.

"Twenty-five cents couldn't be better invested. Thank you, ma'am. One of the big ones? Yes, ma'am. Much obliged. Who's the next? Thank you, sir. May you live long and be happy. Here you go, selling 'em off like hot-cakes on a frosty morning. Thank you, sir. Same to you, ma'am. That's right, don't be afraid to buy 'em. I've only a few left, but I can sell you other things. Never object to selling things, that's what I'm here for.

"Here you have our patent alarm clock and music-box combined—rings an alarm and plays a tune. If you've got to get up and catch an early train it plays 'Five O'clock in the Morning,' and if there are burglars in the house it starts off on 'Johnny, Get Your Gun,' suiting its tunes to the occasions. Half a dollar is all I ask for this household treasure, only a few more left, grab 'em quick.

"Here is our patent shaving-mug, soap-dish, water-cooler, cusp dore and washbowl combined. Can be used for any and all these things, never gets out of order, can't rust, won't break, don't gather moths, and is always ready. Once you use 'em you'll never leave off. A box of tooth-powder given with every one, and a map of Ireland thrown in.

"Next you have our anti-bilious, non-corrosive, useful-in-all-climates, never-wear-out lightning shoe paste, puts a polish on anything, even the manners of a member of congress or the temper of a boarding-house keeper, sold for ten cents a box and a brush thrown in, sold for less than half cost, but the holidays are coming and I can afford to be generous. Peter, hand me up a gross of 'em, there's going to be a big demand. Here you go, gentlemen. Every handsome man who buys a box is presented with a pocket-mirror."

Thus Sam rattled away, getting rid of one thing and another, selling his trinkets, notions and patent articles as fast as he could hand them out, and keeping the crowd in continual good nature.

The money fairly poured in, but Sam gave the gang the worth of it, and every now and then tossed in a song or a dance, or both, or a solo on the bugle, and so kept the ball rolling.

The more the crowd bought, the more they wanted to, and in an hour Sam had cleaned out all his small wares, and had to fall back on big things.

Tooth paste, shoe blacking, hair dye, corn salve, stationery and cologne went a flying, and at last there wasn't as much as a paper of pins left out of the small stock, and dress goods, cooking stoves and burglar alarms had to be put up.

"We hit 'em hard to-night, Petey," said Sam, when he and his chum and partner were having their good-night smoke.

"Yes, sir. Guess we can buy our seal-ulsters pretty soon."

"Oh, yes, and our diamond-studs, if the weather remains salubrious."

"What are you going to do when the snow comes and the roads are blocked?"

"Do as the bobolinks do, go South, I reckon."

"Cost you more for licenses, my son?"

"Well, I can soak 'em on prices. Your real Southern aristocrat won't buy a thing unless it's got a big price on it. Let grand opera go there and show at fifty cents a seat and nobody will attend, but a nigger show can come along and charge a dollar and the house will be packed."

"You've got a big head, Samuel."

"No, sir; I don't drink."

The next day was spent in the same town, for Sam had struck it rich and meant to work it for all it was worth, and not skip out after one night as he did in the smaller places.

That day Sam received a small electric machine by express, having bought it to experiment with and as an addition to his show.

He and Peter were trying it just before supper and seeing how it worked, when in came Solomon, looking very mysterious, and said:

"I've got siffin' to tell yo', Marse Sam; siffin' bery 'portant."

"Well, Young Ebony, what is it?"

"Dey's a prar meetin' in town to-night, ober at de col'd chu'ch."

"No? You don't say?"

"Yas'r, an' I flink fader 'lows he's goin', kase h'm been singin' cam' meetin' tunes all de aft'noon."

"All right, Solomon, you're a good boy. There's a quarter for you."

"Tank yo', Marse Sam. Yo's bery kin' to a po' boy."

"Now go and send your father in here, but don't tell him that you've said anything to me."

"No, sah, I won't, not de fus' word."

Then Solomon ran off, muttering to himself when he got outside:

"Gorry! reckon I tell de boss ebery day dat fader's gwine off ter meetin', ef I git a quartah ebery time; yas'r, I do dat fo' sartin'. Wondah I didn't flink ob it befo'."

In a few minutes Jeremiah came in, looking particularly happy, and said:

"Yow sen' fo' me, boss?"

"Yes. We're trying to fix this machine, and we need your help."

"What kin' ob machine am dat, boss? Sewin' machine?"

"Well, yes. Something like that. Just take hold of those handles, and hold on till I tell you to stop."

"Hol' on to dem han'les, boss?"

"That's it, and mind you don't let go either."

"No, sah, I hol' on jes' like de ol' debil do, when he catch hol' ob a po' sannah."

"That's the talk."

Jeremiah John Joseph grabbed hold of the handles, and Sam began to turn the crank for all he was worth.

The coon got a shock, of course, and tried to drop the handles.

Sam turned all the faster, and poor Jere John Joe thought he had fallen into a stack of pins and needles.

"Hi dar. Whoa, hol' on, boss," he cried, dancing and hopping about. "Let go de machine! Siffin's 'tickin' inter me! Glory fo' goodness!"

Stop de machine! Oh, Lawd!"

Poor Jeremiah couldn't let go the handles to save his neck, and he got awfully scared.

His wool stood up straight, his eyes bulged out, his teeth chattered, and he danced like a barefooted boy on a hot pavement.

The electric current ran all through him, and he thought all the coons in town were after him with razors.

"Oh, boss, fo' de Lawd's sake, stop de machine."

"Don't you let go, Jeremiah!"

"Fo' de lan' sakes, I keant. Whoa, dar! hol' on, stop de injine."

How that poor coon did hop and skip!

Peter was nearly dying with laughing, but Sam was as sober as a judge.

"Hol' on, boss, hol' on, fo' de lub of de Lawd."

Sam gave an extra turn to the crank, and said:

"You were thinking of sneaking away to meeting to-night without asking permission?"

"No, boss, 'deed I wasn'. I war gwine to ax yo', shuah."

"Is that so?" and Sam gave another turn.

"Yas'r, I wasn't gwine ter say nuffin' 'bout it," howled Jeremiah.

"But you won't go now?"

"No, boss, no, take my oath I won't," cried Jeremiah, dancing up and down like a jumping jack.

"And you won't go at any other time without coming to me first?"

"No, sah. Oh, boss, fo' goodness sakes please do let up on de machine," whined that suffering coon.

"Are you sorry?"

"Yas'r, berry sorry."

"And you won't try to deceive me again?"

"No, sah, never."

"Sure?"

"Hope ter die if I do, boss."

"All right," and Sam turned off the current.

Poor Jeremiah's face was the color of ashes, and his knees shook together like clappers.

He released those innocent looking handles in a jiffy and then stood gazing at the machine.

"Am dat really fo' truly a sewin' machine, boss?" he asked at length, when he had given it a good look.

"Certainly. Didn't you feel the needles? If I had wanted to, I could have sewed you all up."

"Fo' de lan' sake," muttered Jeremiah.

Then, evidently afraid that Sam would try it again, he suddenly bolted out of the room in red hot haste.

"That's the best thing yet," chuckled Sam.

"It'll fetch that coon every time."

"Yes, if you can get him to take hold, but I don't believe he would touch it now with a forty foot pole."

"Oh, I'll contrive to give him a shock now and then, just by the way of warning."

"You fetched him this time, anyhow," laughed Peter.

Jeremiah John was all broken up and didn't get over the scare for an hour.

"Glory!" he ejaculated. "Didn't neber 'spect dat de boss toted de debil roun' in a box. Reckin I've gotter keep putty straight 'less he catch me agin. Reckon it ain' no sin ter go ter meetin'. De debil can't tech me fo' dat! Guess de sin am in gwine off wifout leabe. Gorry! I look out fo' my self affah dis, ef dat's what's gwine ter happen ebery time I wanter go anywheres wifout sayin' nuffin'."

The next morning, when they started off, Jeremiah complained of being sick, and he certainly did not look particularly brisk.

He had a headache, his back felt as if he'd been walking on it, his knees were stiff, and his tongue had a regular ulcer on it, a coat being nothing to the white garment it wore.

He didn't say very much, but Sam noticed that he did not play the bugle with his accustomed vivacity, and so, when they struck the next town, a pretty big place, too, he said:

"What's the trouble, Mr. Smith? You don't appear to be yourself this morning at all. What ails you?"

"I've bery sick, boss, deed I is," moaned Jeremiah. "Feels all broke up, sure 'nuff."

"Well, you'd better go to a doctor, then, and get some medicine."

"Whar I foun' one, boss?"

"We passed a big drug store half a block or so behind," said Peter, the party being now in the public square.

"Run back and ask the drug store man," said Sam. "He'll tell you where you can find a doctor, I guess."

So Jeremiah climbed down, uniform and all, and started back to find the drug store.

His gorgeous appearance caught the attention of the crowd, and they gazed at him in wonder.

"What is it—a patent medicine seller?"

"No; that's one of the European Minstrel's what shows in the Opera House ter-night."

"Is that real gold on his coat, or only imitation?"



"Awfully stunning, ain't he? If they all dress like that the show must be a ripper."

Jeremiah paid no attention to these remarks, but went straight on, and presently arrived at the pill palaces, opened the door and went in.

A smiling clerk, who was flirting with a lady customer, looked up, grinned broadly and asked his errand.

"Kin yo' tell me whar I fin' a doctah, boss?" asked Jeremiah. "I'se bery sick, an' wan' de mos' mediate 'tention."

"Why, yes; there's Dr. Bolus, he just went out of here a moment ago. He went up the street. If you walk fast you'll catch him."

"What sorter lookin' man am de doctah, sah?"

"Short and stout, and good-looking, and carries a little leather medicine case."

"A' right, sah; I fin' him, sure 'nuff."

Then Jeremiah bolted out of the door with the speed of a messenger boy going to his hash.

He met the doctor right in front of the store.

Stopping the rotund and jolly-looking physician, he asked:

"Kin yo' gib me a 'scription, doctah? I'se bery sick dis mo'nin', an' I dunno as I kin lib mo'n a few houahs."

The doctor smiled, being considerable of a wag and practical joker himself, and then said:

"Oh, is it as bad as that?"

"Yes'r, it am wuss. Neber war so sick befo'. Spec's if I don' get some 'lief putty quick I kick de bucket."

"H'm! you do look pretty bad," muttered the doctor, "but I guess I can fix you up."

"Kin yo', doctah?" cried Jeremiah John, joyously. "Wha' yo' gwine ter do fo' me?"

"Shut your eyes and put your tongue out—away out, furtner yet, and don't move till I tell you."

Jeremiah closed his eyes and thrust out a foot, more or less, of long red tongue.

He stood there like a very gorgeous wax figure, his eyes closed and his tongue sticking away out and extending an invitation to all the flies in the neighborhood.

"H'm! very nice case," muttered the doctor, preparing to steal away, "very nice, indeed. Don't move now, or open your eyes, till I tell you. Put out your tongue a little further, please."

There wasn't very much more to put out, unless Jeremiah turned himself inside out, but he managed it somehow or other.

The dizzily attired coon, in his big green and gold coat, knee-breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes to match, with his big gold-laced hat, standing there with his tongue stuck out, was funny enough to make a cat laugh.

There he stood, in all his grandeur, as stiff as a stone, with his tongue exposed to the air, while the doctor softly giggled, and then as softly glided away.

Did that comical coon attract any attention as he stood thusly?

Did he?

Well, just wait, and you'll see.

### CHAPTER XIII.

THERE stood that big coon, Jeremiah, in all his glory, in the middle of the walk, with his eyes shut and his tongue sticking out.

He might have been a stone for all the motion he made.

Of course such a figure could not stand there long without drawing notice.

It wasn't long, therefore, before the youngsters began to gather around.

They came in ones, twos and threes, and by droves, and all stared at the coon.

They were of all ages, sizes and sexes, of all classes and conditions, and all had something to say.

They stared and they stared, and they made remarks.

"What's that colored man standing there for?"

"Is he trying to catch flies or what?"

"Guess it's what."

"Don't he look funny?"

"Oh, he's doing that for a bet."

"Wonder if he wants yer ter put a penny on his tongue."

"I'll bet he's got the measles, and it's catchin'."

"Oh!"

That oh was so spontaneous and unanimous, that it made Jeremiah open his eyes and pull in his tongue.

Then he saw that gang of kids looking at him.

The doctor had vanished, and only the youngsters remained.

Jeremiah realized that he had been badly sold.

"Do idea!" he muttered. "Wha' dat doctah do dat fo'?"

Then he started for the drug store with anger in his soul.

Sweeping the youngsters rudely aside, he returned to the compounder of pills, and said angrily:

"Wha' fo' yo' sen' me to dat big fool doctah, h'm?"

"Dr. Bolus?" asked the clerk.

"Dat's him. He'm no good. I wouldn' hab him doctah a sick kitten."

"Why, what's the matter with him?"

"H'm! he tol' me tu' lick my tongue out, an' den he wen' away an' lef' me dere wif my tongue tickin' out, jes' like a fool."

The clerk grinned, and then said:

"Why, that was all right. Your tongue needs oxygen and—"

"Wha' kin' ob gin jew say? I'se temp'ance, I is, an' I don' drink nuffin'."

"Oxygen I said; that's something that's in the air, and it's very necessary to have plenty of it. You do look pretty sick, and I guess your stock has run low."

"Am it so bad as dat?" muttered Jeremiah, nervously.

"Yes, indeed; but I guess I can fix you up now that I know the diagnosis of—"

"Know de noses of de case. How many noses duz a man hab, fo' goodness sakes? I'se on'y got one."

"Your symptoms, I would say."

"Oh, yas, I unnerstand."

"I'll fix you all right in a jiffy, my dear, sir. Just put out your tongue and shut your eyes."

"Yo' won' leabe me stannin' yer like a big fool?"

"Oh, no. You won't stand very long, I fancy."

Then Jeremiah shut his eyes, opened his mouth, and thrust out that long tongue of his.

"Open your mouth a little wider, if you please."

Jeremiah opened his mouth till you couldn't see anything else of him.

Then that funny clerk got a bottle of some particularly hot stuff and soused about a quart of it into that cavity.

Jeremiah gave a gulp, a gasp and a howl, clapped his hand to his mouth, and went dancing around like a madman.

"Wow-ow! fo' goodness sakes, does yo' wantter seal' me?" he growled. "Does yo' fink I kin swaller red-hot stuff like a dat?"

The clerk laughed, and Jeremiah got madder than ever.

He wasn't going to be made a laughing stock of by every silly drug clerk if he knew it.

He got his fighting temper away up and proceeded to sail into that clerk.

"I'se a membah ob de church, sah, an' I doesn' b'lieve in fightin', 'cept on 'special 'casions, an' dis am one ob de 'casions."

Then he went for that funny drug clerk and, if he had ever hit him, would have made hash of him in short order.

The clerk was equal to the emergency, however, and grabbing up a mineral water bottle, touched the stopper, and let that coon have the stream right in the jaw.

That was something Jeremiah had not expected, and he bent a hasty retreat.

"Gorry, didn't fink he war gwine ter shoot!" he gasped as he rushed out. "I jes' on'y wanted a minnit to fix him up brown, but he done it fo' me in less time dan dat."

Then he returned to the wagon feeling considerably better, the hot stuff having warmed him up and settled his stomach.

Sam had heard of the little racket the doctor had played on the coon, for it was now all over the street, like the mud, and he and Peter were laughing at it when Jeremiah came along.

Sam then drove to the hotel, saying, nothing to Jeremiah, however, as he perceived that that coon was looking pretty mad.

The afternoon was spent as usual, in working up the town for the evening.

Just before supper Solomon came to Sam, as he was fooling with his electric machine, and said in a whisper:

"Yo' wantter look out, boss. Fader am gwine to de col'd meetin' dis ebenin' ef he get a chance."

There was a look of expectancy in that little coon's face which Sam tumbled to in a moment.

Solomon was working a racket to get another quarter.

It was likely that Jeremiah had no intention whatever, of going to meeting.

Neither did he, but Solomon found that telling on him the day before had produced good results, and he argued that fiction would work as well as truth.

Sam was up to that young coon's little racket, however.

"You're a good boy, Solomon, to come and tell me. Here's a quarter for you."

How that little nig's eyes danced as he came forward to snatch the silver!

Sam placed it on the plate of his electric machine instead of handing it out, however.

Then he began to quietly turn the crank of his machine.

All that Solomon saw was the quarter, and he attempted to pick it up.

Then he wished that he had not tried it. It stung him like a dozen needles, all sticking into his fingers at once.

He dropped that quarter in a jiffy, and stuck his fingers in his mouth.

"What's the matter, Solomon?" asked Sam, quietly.

"I didn' fink yo' do dat to me, Marse Sam," muttered the little nig.

"Do what, Solomon?"

"Put dat quahdah in de fiah till um war red-hot, an' den ax me fo' to pick it up."

"Why, that quarter is all right, Solomon. It hasn't been heated."

"Wha' fo' it bone my fingahs, den?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Pick it up, Petey, and show the coon that it's all right."

Peter had a couple of little glass thimbles on his finger ends, and when he lifted that electrified cent he was insulated, and so it did not give him a shock.

"You see, it's all right," he said, and then he dropped the quarter on the plate again.

"There you are, go and take it."

"Why didn't yo' gub it ter me when yo' had um?"

"Pick it up, Solomon," said Sam.

Solomon did not know about that, but thought that perhaps he had better make a second attempt to collar that coin.

He did so, and with a result similar to the first, only more so.

Sam gave him a shock that nearly knocked him off his feet.

"On-wow! 'Spec de debbil am in dat quatah!" he howled, as he dropped it.

"Solomon," said Sam, with mock solemnity, "you have been lying to me."

"Take my oaf I habn't, Marse Sam!" cried the little moke.

"Yes, you have, and you know it. Your father had no idea of going to meeting to-night."

"Yes'r, he did, really fo' truly. I heard him say so to hisse'f."

"Solomon, that quarter is a magic coin," said Sam, with great impressiveness. "If an honest boy takes it, all right, but if a bad or lying boy tries to pick it up it burns him."

"Fo' de lan' sake, am dat so?" cried Solomon, his eyes sticking away out like a crab's.

"Yes, sir, and that's how I found you out?"

"Deed, boss, I habent tol' no lie 't all," cried Solomon, who was eager to possess that quarter.

"All right, if you haven't, pick up that quarter."

"Wall, I guess I don' wan' nuffin' fo' tellin' yer," muttered Solomon. "I didn' 'spec' nuffin' in de fus' place."

Then he started to leave the room, and Peter burst out laughing.

"You little liar!" cried Sam, and as that young coon went out the door Sam helped him considerably with the toe of his boot.

A few minutes later Jeremiah came into the room and said:

"Wha' fo' yo' kick my boy fo', boss? Am it in de contrac' dat yo' is ter kick him wheneber yo' like?"

"I kicked him because he lied to me," answered Sam, "and I'll kick him every time he does it."

"Dat boy lied ter yo', boss?"

"That's it."

"What he lie 'bout?"

"He said that you were going to sneak away to prayer meeting without permission."

"De little willin'!" muttered Jeremiah. "Neber had no sech 'entions 'tall, boss. Jew b'lebe I had?"

"No, Jeremiah, I did not, and that's why I kicked him out."

"Sarbe um right, boss, sarbe um dead right. Yo' kin 'peat de dose ebery time yo' catch him. I'se a membah ob de chu'ch, an' I can' hab no son ob mine tellin' lies."

Then that indignant coon went off, got a barrel stave out of the cellar, and then found that mendacious son of his.

He grabbed Solomon before that youthful moke knew what was coming, and chucked him over a horse block.

Solomon was dressed for business and had on tights, which were made tighter yet, when Jeremiah bent him double with one hand, and whacked him over the rear with the barrel stave.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Dat's fo' lyin' 'bout me, Solomon Sniff! How yo' like it?"

Whack, spat, thwack!

"Tell 'ories on yo' fader, will yo', yo' young willin'?"

Whack!

"Jes' a min' ter lick yo' till yo' can' 'tan up, yo' mis'able liab!"

Whack!

Every time that stave came across Solomon's latter end it made the dust fly and raised a welt half an inch thick.



Jeremiah had lots of energy and he put it all into that stave.

Every time he got whacked, Solomon would kick and yell and scream, and try to get away, but all to no purpose.

Jeremiah held firmly to him with one hand, and belted away with the other.

You can just imagine that those whacks hurt, particularly with tight breeches on, and bent double at that.

"Yo' go roun' tellin' any mo' lies 'bout me, an' yo' know what yo' get."

Whack!

"Ow-ow, don' whip me no mo' an' I be good, ow-ow, fader, plea' don' whip me no mo'!"

"Here, in the first place is our patent never-get-hot stove lifter, just the very thing that all house-keepers have been crying for for the last three generations, and now first put upon the market. Never gets heated, and makes you use cuss words, never falls on your toes and makes you kick the cat, always handy and never hot."

"Save trouble by buying this handy little article; no greasy, dirty rags hanging about under foot, and never found when they are wanted, to lift it with, but always cool, just like ice cream, never burns your fingers, and always ready."

"Used in the kitchens of all the crowned heads of Europe, patronized by the President, indorsed by editors, called for by the clergy, praised by the

No old horses' hoofs, niggers' heels or decayed bootlegs in this, but every cake guaranteed superfine and an affidavit given away with each.

"If you want a soporific buy the Lady Washington, if you want a subsidy, get the suds here and—can't work a pun on that, thought I could, but never mind, the soap will speak for itself. Twenty-five cents a box and a picture of Mrs. Langtry given away with each box. She uses it, I believe, and calls it fine. Peter pass up some more boxes."

"You all know that being clean is next to being good, and if you can't be one you won't be the other, that's as true as preaching, so step up and buy while you have a chance."



There stood that big coon, Jeremiah, in all his glory, in the middle of the walk, with his eyes shut and his tongue sticking out. He might have been a stone for all the motion he made. Of course such a figure could not stand there long without drawing notice.

Whack!

This time the barrel stave split in two, and Solomon gave such a jump that he got away from his wrathful parent, and tumbled off the horse-block to the ground.

Then he went limping off, feeling a sadness which he knew would return whenever he wanted to sit down, and trying to choke down his sobs.

"Derel reckon yo' won' wanten tell any mo' lies 'bout me, sah!" called Jeremiah after him. "De bery nex' time I cotch yo' at it, Marse Sam he kick you 'fom de room an' I lick yo' aftahwude."

"Neber did see such a onlucky boy as I be," muttered that young coon. "Fus' de quahtah bone my fingahs, den' de boss kick me out, and den fader wallop me like de dooce till I kean't sit down, an' all fo' jus' tellin' a lilly bit ob a story."

However, the lesson was not lost on him, and he never tried to fool the boss again.

"Don' car' if fader runs away ter meetin' eb'ry day," he growled. "Bet ver life I won' tell nuffin' Ef de boss don' wan' him to go, let him watch he own se'f."

That evening, after singing two or three songs, introducing the trick dog, Moses, making Jeremiah blow his bugle, and playing on the banjo with Peter, Sam stepped forward, opened his budget and cried:

"This way, this way, ladies and gents, if you want to find real genuine no-dodging bargains, the kind you read about but seldom see, the regular gilt edged sort, don't you know."

public, wanted by women, mourned for by men, and in use everywhere.

"Price ten cents, and a box of matches thrown in. Always did like good matches—that's why I have darky footmen with black horses—but these matches match the lifters; they are a necessity. Buy one and see for yourself; going at ten cents."

"Everybody likes to get a lift in life, and everybody ought to have a lifter; can be used to crack nuts, open oysters, amputate tomato cans, poke the fire, pull off your boots with, or to chuck at the cats on the back fence of a night. Most useful little thing you ever saw, and sold for only ten cents."

The lifters went and then a lot of pancake turners; then suspenders, handkerchiefs and shoe buttoners, and after them a lot of knives and forks.

"Try our Lady Washington soap, ladies. We call it that because I saw a lady washing tons of clothes with it, and because I'm patriotic, and believe in George Wash, the father of his country."

"This soap will wash anything. Shipwrecked sailors can wash themselves ashore with it. Never got off that joke to this crowd, did I? I've had it for some time and it needs shaving, badly. It has whiskers on it, but I guess I can use it again. You needn't laugh, if you don't want to. Don't think it's very funny myself, but the soap is good for all that."

"Everybody uses soap, or ought to, if they don't, and here's a kind that will please the whole world."

"There was a young man of Oshkosh,  
Whose parents could never make wash,  
Till they made him choose soap,  
Or the end of a rope,  
And vowed they would thrash him, by gosh."

"There was a man out in Calcutta,  
Preferred eating soap to butta,  
Till at last too much lye,  
Did cause him to dye,  
And he ended his life in the gutta."

"So you see soap has its uses, as well as its abuses, but the thing is to know how to make the best of what you have. Twenty-five cents a box, six cakes in every box, our trade mark on each cake. Toss 'em some more, Peter; never struck such a dirty crowd, guess they haven't seen any soap for six months."

Sam must have been eating soap by the way his tongue rattled, for soap makes things move easier if well rubbed in, they say, and that lively young peddler talked at the rate of seventeen to the dozen.

After a while when trade began to slacken a bit Sam thought it about time to have a little fun.

He brought out his little electric machine, placed it on the stand and said:

"Now then, ladies and gentlemen, I propose to show you a few simple tricks in electricity. Does anybody want a shock?"

"They don't believe in such shocking things," said Peter.



"Then maybe you'll show them how it's done?"

"Certainly, anything to oblige."

Peter then took a little shock for a cent, and after that Sam showed some experiments with dancing puppets with a fur muff and other things.

Presently a tall, raw-boned rustic stepped up to the platform and said:

"Say, mister, kin you give me a shock like you gave t'other feller?"

"Certainly, and a bigger one, too."

"D'ye meanter say yew kin make me keep holt o' them handles wuther I want or not?"

"Certainly."

"Bet yew a nickel yew can't."

"I'll double your stakes, my friend."

"Then yew'll lose, b' goash."

"I don't think so."

"Wall, I know so, an' I'm willin' ter bet ye a quarter yew can't."

"I'll go you half a dollar on it."

"Yew'll lose."

"All right; step up here and try."

The rustic then ascended the steps and took hold of the handles while Sam began to turn.

"H'm, that ain't nuthin'. I kin stand more'n that."

Sam gave him more but he did not seem to mind it.

"Tell you I kin let go o' them handles any time I like."

"All right, let go of them now," and Sam sent the wheel spinning around like blazes.

"Ow-ow, leggo!" yelled the rustic, beginning to dance.

"Why don't you let go?" inquired Sam, getting up more steam.

"Hold on thar, yew pesky critter!" howled the countryman, beginning to dance.

"Stop her, stop her, I say; stop her!"

"Where's your quarter now?"

The hayseeder jumped and squirmed and kicked while the crowd laughed itself sick.

"Why don't you let go, Perkins?"

"Can't shock you, can they?"

"Why don't you hedge, old man?"

"Hold on, don't gimme any more, hold on."

But Sam gave her another twist, knowing that the whole capacity of his machine was not enough to hurt the fellow.

It was more than the fellow wanted, however, and suddenly, when he got another shock he lifted up his big foot and sent table, electric machine and the whole business flying.

Sam landed on the ground with the wrecked apparatus on top of him, while the enraged countryman struck out right and left.

He took Jeremiah in the stomach, and sent him flying into the interior of the wagon, all doubled up.

Solomon got a kick in the rear that sent him off the platform and into the middle of the crowd in a jiffy.

Peter was knocked out of time in one round, and was under the wagon before he knew where he was.

Poor Moses, the trick dog, was sent kiting after the rest of the firm, and then Country had the platform to himself.

He gazed around as mad as a wet hen, and muttered, angrily:

"Come up here, the hull crowd on ye! Play roots on Josh Perkins, will ye? Wall, I guess not."

"You owe me a quarter, Josh," cried Sam, picking himself up.

"Wall, yew better come an' collect it then, if I do," growled Josh.

"I'll send my book-keeper around."

"Guess yew better, gol darn ye!" muttered the rustic. "I'd jest like to give him an' yew the durnedest lickin' yew ever had. I kin lick any man in this hull crowd, an' I ain't goin' tew git down till I dew it, nuther."

"Turn the hose on him!"

"Hit him with a brick!"

"Put him in a cage!"

"Yew can't none o' ye dew nuthin', an' I dare ye to come up an' tickle me."

Then that mad countryman began to smash Sam's lamps, to scatter his stock around, and to raise mischief generally.

Jeremiah John was on hand, however, and he now came to the rescue.

He saw that if something wasn't done to stop him that that countryman would do no end of damage.

He was still inside the wagon, but he now felt around and felt a case of shoe blacking right under his hand.

He hauled out a dozen or more small, round bottles of blacking, stuck them on his arm and sallied forth.

Whack!

A bottle struck the rustic on the breast, broke and spattered all over him.

Thump!

One took him on the head, bursted and altered his complexion at once.

Spat!

Two more hit him in the neck, exploded and ran down his back.

Squash!

This time he got the bottles in one, two, three order, and began to look like the spotted man in the museum.

The bottles were of very thin glass, and the force with which Jeremiah threw them caused them to break every time.

The rustic tried to dodge, but Jeremiah's next shot caught him right in the mouth.

That was too much, and with a yell he turned and jumped off the platform.

Then the crowd got at him and hustled him out of that in two shakes.

"Jeremiah John, you're a trump," said Sam, "and ought to have a medal."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

JEREMIAH had done Sam a service in getting rid of that contumacious countryman by bombarding him with bottles of blacking, and Sam felt very grateful.

"You ain't half a bad fellow, Jeremiah John," he said, when they had shut up the shop and driven back to the stable, "and I'll remember you for what you did for me to night."

"Won't you have a drink of something?" asked Peter.

"No, Marse Petey, I neber drinks nuffin', I see a membah ob de chu'ch."

"Then take a smoke?" suggested Sam.

"No, tank yo', boss. Dat am agin my rules, too."

"Well, I'll raise your wages, anyhow," said Sam.

"I'll give you a dollar a week extra, and here's five dollars now, as a present."

"Yo'm bery kin', boss," said Jeremiah.

"Not a bit of it, Jeremiah. You saved my stock and wagon from destruction, and I owe you something for it."

"Day's one ting I would like ter hab yo' do fo' me, boss," said Jeremiah, modestly.

"What's that?"

"Lemme go to pra'r meetin' now an' den, boss."

Sam laughed, but said at once:

"Well, Jeremiah, if you don't ask too often I'll let you go."

"Tank yo', boss; yo'm bery kin', an' dat's all I'll ax yo'."

"All right," said Sam, and then he and Peter went up-stairs to have a chat and a smoke, and count up their gains for the night.

"The machine wasn't all busted, was it?" asked Peter.

"No, it can be fixed up at a slight expense. I think, though, that after this I'll try it on less muscular fellows than that lout."

"But how he did look when Jeremiah began to pepper him with those bottles. He was all over spots."

"Yes, and then the coon knocked spots out of him," chuckled Sam. "That make is a treasure."

"Oh, yes, he isn't so bad when you keep him well in hand, but you don't want to spoil him by letting him think he's a wonderful fellow, for if you do he'll be walking over you in less than no time."

"I'll risk the promenading," said Sam, quietly, as he blew a great cloud of smoke toward the ceiling.

Jeremiah, meanwhile, was congratulating himself on the success of his own schemes.

"I see gwine ter meetin' wifout habin' ter run away on de quiet," he chuckled. "Glory halleluger! dat am de bes' ting dat eber happen. Won' dere be a great outpo'in ob de sperrit de nex' time I has a chance ter get ter meetin'?"

Wall, I reckon. Oh, bress de Lawd," and that happy make laughed in the joyfulest way he knew how.

Three or four days after this when they had struck a quiet river town, Jeremiah went to Sam in the afternoon, and said:

"Boss, dere am a lub feas' an' pra'r meetin' in de cold Mefodis chu'ch crost de riber, dis ebenin'. Kin I go, sah?"

"Certainly," said Sam, "but you mustn't ask to go again this week."

"No, boss, I won', fo' shuah."

"All right then, you can go, but be home early."

"Yas'r, I be in by ten o'clock, shuah."

"Very well, see that you do."

Knowing that Jeremiah would not be on hand Sam made his preparations accordingly, but said nothing to Peter about it.

After supper a load of coons went over the river to the colored church, going around the road and over a bridge some two miles distant.

Jeremiah was the biggest and most important coon in the load, for he had Sam's permission to go and was not afraid of anything happening in consequence of disobedience.

Something was going to happen for all that, however.

Just before time to hitch up, Peter went around to the barn to look for the big nig.

He found only the little one and Sam and said:

"Where's Jeremiah John?"

"Donno, Marse Pete, 'less he's run off to meetin'."

"And you couldn't keep a watch on him?" asked Peter of Sam.

"No, he was too much for me."

"You know we wanted him to-night of all nights."

"Yes, I suppose we did."

"We were going to put on a new act."

"Yes, so we were."

"And you let that coon get away from you," cried Peter, angrily.

"There's no denying it."

"And your name is Smart! You ought to change it."

"Reckon I ought."

"The idea! It's perfectly ridiculous the way that make goes on," continued Peter, getting madder and madder.

"Yes, so it is."

"And you make him worse! I declare, we'd better shut up shop entirely."

"It is pretty bad," said Sam, quietly.

The madder Peter got, the more cool and collected Sam became.

Finally, when Peter got his mad away up to the boiling point, Sam said, quietly:

"It's all right, Petey. Just hold your horses. Jeremiah came to me and asked permission to go, and I let him off."

"Oh!"

"That was all Peter said.

He wilted right away, and came down any number of pegs.

"Why didn't you say so?" he asked, somewhat hurt.

"Oh, I wanted to see you fume a bit."

"Well, you saw me," laughed Peter, good-naturedly. "I was just getting ready to chew that coon up when he came back."

"We'll put off the new act till we get to a bigger town, and now suppose we hitch up?"

Jeremiah, meanwhile, was on the way to meeting, feeling as proud as the drum major of a high-toned regiment.

When they reached the church and the services began, he had more to say than the minister even.

"Bredren an' sistahs, I see jes' got one wo'd to say to yo'," he shouted, jumping up in his seat, when the first hymn had been sung, "an' dat am dis. Hab yo' made yo' peace wif de Lawd?"

"Ef yo' habn't, yo' bettah do it bery sudden, or de do' 'll be shet an' yo'll hab to look out fo' de wraf ob de Lawd. Tol' yo' what. Yo' bettah do anyting else dan get de Lawd agin yo'."

"Bredren, dere am two roads in dis yer worl', an' yo' hab all gotter trabel one or de oder ob dem. Yo' kean't go cross lots to heaben; nohow, but yo' be gotter get inter de stret an' narrer road."

"One road, bredren, am de stret an' narrer road what leads to eberlassin' bliss. It am a habd road to trabel, full ob sticks, and stuns, an' all dem tings, but it ain' half so habd as de oder arter yo' get 'long a-ways."

"Bum-bye yo' kin see de glory ob de promise lan' a-shinin' 'long de way, an' de angels comin' down de paff to meet yo', a-singin' glory an' playin' on de golden Jew's-harp as putty as a show."

"Dat am de road yo' want'er trabel, bred'ren, an' not de oder one, de one wha' lead to de pit, an' wha' de ole Jebbil am waitin' at de toder end to take yo' in."

"Dat am a easy road fust off, bred'ren. It am all smool as glass; de streets am all paved fust class; dere am roses growin' by de side ob de road; de houses am all fresh white-washed, an' de coons am dressed in deir bes' duds."

"Jes' yo' wait till yo' get 'long a way on dat road, bred'ren, an' I tol' yo' so' truly dat yo' wish yo'd neber took it. Yo' shoes'll burn off'n yo' feet, de roses'll wilt, de high-toned coons is griinnin' debbils, and in ebery one ob dem white-washed houses, moah debbils is waitin' fo' yo'."

"Ef yo' get on that road, bred'ren, jes' yo' done turn rou', fo' yo' go too fah. Ef yo' don' dere won' be no turnin' back, an' yo' kean't go ober de fiel's an' get to de oder road. Yo's jes' gotter go back to de cross-roads an' get on de right track agin ef yo' want'er be sated."

"Dat's wha' de gospul am fo', belubbed bredren, to rank sinnahs out ob de wrong road an' foteh 'em up to de frone. It am bettah to go ob yo' own 'cord, but ef yo' won', den yo' orter be foteh right up short, an' druv back to de fo'!"

"Yas'r, yo' want'er get inter de fol' ob de Lawd, and not stay outside 'mong de brack sheep fo' de debbil to catch up on him pitchfork an' frow into de fiah. Oh, bredren, lemme uttah de voice ob wahnin'—lemme show yo' de way—"



"Brudder Smiff," spoke up one of the deacons, "don' yo' tink dat one wo'd ob youah's am a putty long one? Yo've been talkin' fas' us yo' kin fo' 'bout ten minutes, an' I reckon yo' mas' be out ob breff. Sing two stanzers ob de Sebenty-fif' Hymn, bredren."

The hymn couldn't choke Jeremiah off, for he sang louder than the whole congregation put together, and drowned the little organ clean out of sight.

The minute the hymn was over he was on his feet again, and shouting out:

"Les' pray. Deah Lawd, hearken to de voice ob a sinner. Sen' dy sperrit right down yer an' wrastle wif dese niggans; hit 'em hand wif de firs'

jubilee hymn, and Jeremiah began to look for his friends.

They had all gone an hour before, forgetting him in their haste.

"Fo' goodness sake, how's I gwine to get home dis time o' night, wif de waggin gone?" muttered that belated coon.

"Whar yo' lib, brudder?" asked one of the deacons.

"I'se stoppin' at de Sunset House, ober de oder side ob de river."

"How yo' come, by de bridge?"

"Yas'r. Am dern anoder way?"

"Why, bress yo' hahit, honey, de Sunset Ho'se am jes' cross f'om yer. Ef yo' take a boat yo' git dar

big hotel twinkling among the trees, while the night wind whistled around his ears.

There was a distant sound of rushing water, but the coon did not mind that, as he was more intent on getting to the other side than in listening to all sorts of noises.

He paddled away industriously, but when he reached mid-stream he became conscious of a strong current, which greatly interfered with his progress.

Paddle as he would, he kept going down stream, and more that way than across.

Then he became more and more aware of that sound of rushing water, and began to wonder what it meant.



He was plastered all over from head to foot with snow in half a minute. Sam and Peter escaped, but poor Jeremiah got it solid. "Fo' de lan' sakes!" he yelled, as he got one in the eye. "Jes' lemme get down there onct, an' yo' won' fink it so funny!"

ob bleef, and show dem de sinfulness ob deir ways.

"Don' yo' go way f'om yer till all dese coons hab 'pented ob deir sins, an' if dey won', jes' take de club ob de gospul to dem an' knock some sense into deir stupid heads."

"Oh, dat de powah ob de gospul might be felt in de lan', jes' like a showah in dry times when de co'n am all withered an' de taters eaten up wif de rot. Oh, dat all de bredren an' sistahs in de lan'—"

"De fo'ty-toof bymn," cried the parson, and Jeremiah was choked off for the second time.

Then Sister Axlegrease, with a voice like a wheezy trombone, got ahead of him again, and told her experience for fifteen minutes, and after her, brother Liga Rockbottom exhorted, and then the minister had his whack, so that poor Jeremiah seemed to be getting left.

Things began to get warmed up and the meeting was as lively as one could wish.

Jeremiah managed to get the floor again and held it for some time, working those coons up into a regular frenzy.

They danced, they yelled, they sang and they cried, the organist fell down in a fit, and one fat old sister fainted dead away and plained one poor thin brother to the seat, under her two hundred pounds of flesh.

There was great jubilation, and the meeting did not break up till the lights began to go out.

Then the services were wound up with a rattling

in few minuits, an' dat sabs yo' all de trubble ob gwine roun' by de bridge."

"Jew know anybody got a boat dey wanten len', brudder?" asked Jeremiah, catching at this forlorn hope.

"Yas'r, I'se got a boat down dere what I use m'se'f sometimes. Yo' jes go f'roo dis lane an' yo' strike de river bank, an' dere am de boat. She 'm jes' tied to a tree, an' dey ain't no lock on um."

"Reckon yo' len' a brudder yo' bout, dekin'?"

"Spees I would, fo' half a dollah. I'se a hand-wokin' man, I is, an' dat boat done stau' fo' money lots ob times."

Jeremiah was reckoning on appealing to the deacon's generosity, but he had to come down with his little half case before he could have the boat.

Then the deacon pointed out the road, got him started, and wished him good-night.

"Yo' kin len' de boat ober dere, brudder," he said, "an' some day I'll go ober an' get it. Good-night, sah?"

Jeremiah found the boat lying under the bank in the moonlight, and he jumped in, let go the painter and shoved out.

Then he discovered that there was but one oar, and that not in the very best condition.

"Lan' sakes, what I do now?"

One oar was better than none, however, and Jeremiah reckoned he could paddle, on a pinch.

The moonlight shone on the water, and on the opposite bank Jeremiah could see the lights of the

on taking him down stream in spite of all his exertions.

"Neber did see such a contrary boat as dis," he muttered, thrusting his oar deep into the water and giving it a vicious yank.

The oar suspended operations forthwith. It had never been very robust, and was spliced in the bargain.

At this vigorous usage it snapped in two.

The stump was left in Jeremiah's hands, and the blade floated down stream.

So did the boat, while the rushing sound grew louder.

The moon now shone forth brighter than ever, and all at once Jeremiah made a discovery.

There was a mill and a dam just below, and it was the water going over the dam that made all that racket.

Toward this dam the boat was now drifting at a tolerably rapid rate.

All this flashed across that nig's mind in a second.

"Glory fo' goodness!" he ejaculated. "I'se gwine stret ter destruction, I am, fo' shuah! Der Lawd sabs dis po' niggah now, fo' no one else kin!"

Swifter and swifter went the boat, and now the dam was in plain sight.

"Fo' de lan' sakes! Ebery time I go ter meet-in' suffin' is sho' to happen, an' I didn' go way wifout axin' de boss, eider. Oh, deah! I'se gwine



er be groun' ter pieces, on dem rocks, I know I is!"

Swifter grew the current, and nearer came the dam, the water rushing over in seething masses.

"Oh, deah Lawd sabe dis po' niggab, an' foteh him out ob all dese trubbles," groaned poor Jeremiah John, as he sank on one of the seats and clasped his hands.

Thump!

The boat suddenly struck something and stuck.

It was the flash board of the dam.

There was only a few inches of water here, and the boat drew more than that.

"My pra'r am answered!" muttered Jeremiah, "bressed be de Lawd. Reckon dis yer nig ain' gwine ter die jes' yet. Wondah if I kin wake anybody up an' ax 'em to take me ashore?"

The boat was not in danger of going over the dam, but unless help came, Jeremiah would have to stay where he was all night.

To attempt to walk across the dam to shore, even with only that little amount of water flowing over it, was too great a risk.

The boards were slippery with green slime, and one false step would have sent him on the rocks below.

It wasn't to be thought of for a moment.

There the boat stuck, however, and the poor nig couldn't go one way or the other.

"Oh, dear! Kean't a po' membah ob de chu'ch tend services wifout suffin' drestful happenin' ebery time?"

It seemed not, for a solid fact.

"It am all ob' Satan's wo'k. He don' wan' me ter go to chu'ch, an' he makes me trouble, ebery time, so's I done backslide an' be a sinner, but I won' do it, no, sah!"

"Don' car' what de ole debbil do. I'se on de side ob de Lawd an' I'se gwine ter stay dere froo tick an' tin, bet yer boots!"

"Oh, yo' mus' be a fahber ob de lawd.  
Ef yo' wanter go ter heaben when yo' die,  
Yo' mus' fight wid de gospul sword.  
Ef yo' wanter go ter heaben when yo' die."

"Kean't frighten away dis chille f'om de puff ob dooty, no sah, no matiah what yer do. Ain' I raid ob de ole debbil 'tall, I is'n."

"Oh, brudder, heah dem bells a-ringin'.  
Jump on ood' de gospul train,  
Oh, don' yo' heah dem angels singin'.  
Jump on bo'd de gospul train;  
Don' yo' see de conductan comin' roun'?  
Jump on bo'd de gospul train.  
Ef yo' ain't got a ticket yo' get de bounce,  
Jump on bo'd de gospul train."

"Yas'r, reckon I'se got a froo ticket fo' glory, an' de ol' debbil ninter gwine ter chuck me off kase dis yer boat am stuck in de middle ob de river. Oh, deah, why don' somebody come an' took me off. Reckin dey mus' all be dead. Hallo, hallo, hel-loo!" and Jeremiah yelled louder than he ever did in prayer meeting.

"Hello! somebody, everybody, hello! I'se a gone coon, shuah! Hellup, heliup! Ain't nobody gwine fo' ter bellup a po' col'd man and sabe him f'om drowndin'?"

Only the rushing waters answered, for all else was dark and still.

That poor coon yelled till he was hoarse, and finally Sam, in his room at the hotel, heard the racket.

"That sounds like Jeremiah," he muttered, going to the window and opening it. "I wonder if he is locked out."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, ain' nobody gwine to sabe dis niggab?"

"It is he, sure enough, but I can't tell where he is for the life of me."

Then Sam let out that tremendous voice of his and shouted across the river:

"Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac Moses Glory Hallelujah Smith, where are you?"

When the echoes had died away, Sam heard the answer.

"Am dat yo', boss? Wheah is yo'?"

"Where are you?"

"On de river in a boat, stuck fas' on de dam."

"No danger of going over?"

"No, sah, on'y I don' wanter stay yer all night."

"Oh, you're all right!" yelled Sam, and then he shut down the window and returned to his bed, laughing.

"What in thunder are you making all that noise about, Sam?" asked Peter, waking up. "Is the hotel on fire?"

"No, but that coon is stuck fast on the dam, in a boat, in the middle of the river, and is yelling for help. I heard him away up here."

"Well, let him stay there," growled Peter, rolling himself up in the bed-clothes.

"That's what I'm going to do, sonny," replied Sam, jumping into his own bed.

Jeremiah waited awhile for Sam to come to his

rescue, but when half an hour had passed and no Sam appeared he began to call again for help.

This time Sam did not wake up and poor Jeremiah had his yelling for nothing, as nobody paid any attention to him.

Finally, in the dim, gray morning, when the watchful guardian of the mill had had his little nap, he heard that poor coon yelling again and looked out to see what the trouble was.

"Who's doing all that yelling?" he demanded.

"It's me, boss, I'se stuck fas' an' I wanter get to de hotel."

"Well, stay there a bit and I'll come and take you off."

Just as the sun rose that poor shivering nig was towed ashore by the waterman, to whom he had to pay a dollar for his services.

Then he was laughed at by Sam, and Peter, and Solomon, and the hotel clerk, and the landlord, and all the chambermaids, and all the stablemen, and was very much disgusted.

"I reckon 'ligion am a bery nice ting," he muttered, "but ef I'se gwine ter be trubbled like dis all m' life, I reckon de soonah I gibs up bein' 'ligious de bettah."

The winter which had been holding off for some time now took a tumble, and in a few days the roads and fields were all white with snow, the rivers were frozen and Jack Frost had full sway.

Sam had prepared for just such an emergency, and had sent for a pair of runners for his big wagon, to be shipped to a town at which he meant to stop.

They arrived just in time, and the next morning Smart & Co. left town on runners, the wheels being unshipped and slung on behind, ready for use in case the snow went away suddenly.

As they entered the next town Sam prepared to give the natives a big reception.

They gave it to him instead.

Jeremiah, perched away on top of the big box, had just begun to toot on his bugle, and had reached the middle of the second tararum, when the instrument was suddenly choked up by a big snow-ball.

He arose from his seat indignantly, and then he got it on all sides.

Every boy in town seemed to have a special spite against him, and the way they peppered him was a caution.

Snowballs flew as thick as bees, and very few missed the mark.

He was plastered all over from head to foot with snow in half a minute.

Sam and Peter escaped, but poor Jeremiah got it solid.

"Fo' de lan' sakes!" he yelled, as he got one in the eye. "Jes' lemme get down there onct, an' yo' won' flak it so funny!"

## CHAPTER XV.

Poor Jeremiah John Joseph was the target for every small boy in town.

How the snowballs did fly around his devoted and very gorgeous topknot!

Away went his hat, away went his trumpet, and poor Jeremiah John Joseph would like to have gone also.

"Hi, dar, yo' boys, jes' yo' stop o' dat!" he yelled, trying to dodge the missiles.

It was no use.

They plugged him on all sides, till he looked like an animated snow-ball.

"Stop o' dat, I tol' yo'. Hi, boss, stop de hosses till I get down an' pallyze dem boys."

Sam reined in the horses and stopped the sleigh, ready for fun.

Jeremiah got down, intending to go for those boys.

Instead of that they went for him, very cold.

Young men, old men, boys and kids grabbed that poor coon and made life very wearisome for him.

First they chucked him down flat in a big pile of soft, wet, heavy snow.

Then they tied his hands and feet with ropes, strings, bits of harness and anything that came handy.

That was to stop his kicking.

His physical kicking, that is, for they could not stop his mental objections.

Then they rolled him over and over in that soft, wet, heavy, sticky, adhesive snow.

Over and over he went, and at every revolution more snow stuck to him.

"Keep the ball a rolling, boys."

"Give him another turnover."

"He takes the cake, anyhow."

"Stop o' dat, yo' boys, or I tol' de boss."

"Over he goes!"

"Once more for the ice cream!"

"Let her go!"

"Hol' on, hol' on, yo's fillin' my mouf full ob snow."

"Then keep it shut."

"Stop o' dat, I tol' yo'!"

"Give him another turn, boys."

"Yes, he's most done now."

Boys, old men, young fellows and kids all keeping the ball rolling.

The ball was Jeremiah and snow, but mostly snow.

All that you could see of the coon was his head and feet sticking out of either end of a big cylinder of snow.

What fun it was—for the boys.

Jeremiah thought contrariwise. "Lemme get out ob dis, an' I pa'lyze de hull lot ob yo'," he growled.

They weren't letting him up, however.

Instead of that they gave him another cold roll.

The ball was getting almost too big to handle, but the gang put their shoulders to it and sent it over a fresh lot of now.

It grew bigger every second, and Jeremiah got madder.

It was five or six feet high now, and there was that poor nig stuck in the middle of it.

"Big thing on ice!" yelled the crowd.

"African d la creme" remarked one dizzy young gentleman who was just beginning to study French.

"Guess the cream must ha' got scorched by the looks of it," said some one else.

All this time Sam, Peter and Solomon were taking in the show and laughing their insides out.

Finally the big snow cylinder got too big to handle, and the boys left it by the side of the road.

"Lemme out!" howled the captive coon.

He couldn't move, but he could noller as well as ever.

"Lemme out!"

"Better stay where you are, you've got good comfortable winter quarters."

"Wait till the next snow falls and we'll cover your feet. They're too big, just now."

"You keep on yelling and maybe the snow will melt."

"Hi, boss, is yo' gwine away wifout me?" howled the poor moke, seeing Sam driving off.

"Tra-la-la, Jeremiah John Joseph! I'll meet you when the springtime comes, gentle Jere."

Away drove Sam, and all the boys followed that gorgeous turnout to see where it went.

Somebody stuck Jeremiah's stunning hat and bugle on top of the big snow ball, and then they left him.

Somebody else gave him two or three parting shots with snow balls on the top of his kinky cocoon, and then they also left him.

In fact he seemed to have been left all around.

Pretty soon along came the police force of the town, and Jeremiah caught his eye at once.

"What are you doing there?" he demanded.

"Nuffin'."

"Well, you can't loaf around here, so move on."

"Wish ter goodness I mought move," sighed the coon.

"No back talk. If you don't move on I'll take you in."

"Wish yo'd take me out fus', Marse P'liceman," remarked the nig.

"What you trying to do, anyhow? Commit suicide? You'll get arrested for that."

"Reckin I'se done been 'rested a'ready, sah. I'se 'rested long 'nuff, an' I wanter get out ob dis yer pile ob snow."

"No chin, I tell you. Get out of this or I'll run you in."

Then that highly intelligent police force began hammering on the soles of Jeremiah's boots.

"Stop o' dat!" howled the moke. "Yo' jes' wait till I get out ob yer. I'se a membah ob de chu'ch, but I'll pa'lyze yo' all de same fo' dat."

"Threatening an officer, eh?" remarked the police force, and he rapped on Jeremiah's soles once more.

The poor colored gentleman could not kick, but he yelled like blazes and promised all sorts of dreadful things to that country cop when he got out.

At last that soft heavy snow began to settle with its own weight and when the rural constable pounded on Jeremiah's boots again, a big slab fell off with a squash.

That gave Jeremiah a chance to kick and he did so, with startling results.

He took the constable in the stomach, and sent him flying into the gutter with a lot of other rubbish.

The motion released more of the snow and then Jeremiah crawled out, looking like the picture of Jack Frost in the story books.

Just then Sam Smart came along, and after laughing at that big coon all he wanted to, he ferched out his knife and cut the ropes and set him free.

Jeremiah picked up his hat and bugle and walked away to the hotel which Sam pointed out.

"Dat war bery unkin' ob de boss ter let de boys treat a po' cold man dat way," he remarked, as he sadly went on his way. "Neber do dat to him, nohow. Ef he spees I'se gwine ter keep 'way f'om pra'r meetin' a'fah dat, he am bery much mistoken."

Shortly after this Sam stood on the hotel steps, tooted the trumpet, gathered a crowd and shouted out:

"Fellow dudes! come to-night and see the great and only Sam Smart, that's me, the funniest comic singer in the country, the only man who writes his own songs. In his newest and best productions, also the French refugee, Monshoo Pierre Pocquette, the sweet balladist, with his canine wonder, Moses, the trick dog, likewise Sassy Sol, the funny moke and Brudder Jeremiah, the jubilee shouter. Free show to-night in Perkins' Hall, come one, come all."

"After the show, the great knock-down sale will eventuate. All sorts of goods sold at lowest prices, cash on the nail, extra inducements to schools, churches and boarding-houses."

Church organs, rocking horses, Christmas trees, dolls, toys, sewing machines, mowing machines, groceries, dry goods, drugs, and wedding presents, everything going cheap, and all warranted genuine. Remember, Perkins' Hall to-night, at half past seven, door open an hour beforehand, seats free, no extra charge for standing."

It was a trifle too cold and blustery to have the sale in the public square, and so Sam had hired a hall, and in the afternoon he moved a lot of things into it, and got ready for business.



The hall was a tolerably big room on the second floor of a big store, and was used for all sorts of purposes.

Town meetings, travelling theatricals, gift shows and mass meetings, had used it, and on Sundays the colored brethren used it to hold services in, having no church of their own.

The very Sunday before Sam's arrival, there had been a big baptizing racket there, at which all the faithful had been present.

The font was a big hog's head chucked full of water under the platform, and this had not yet been removed.

The planks had been icosely replaced, however, and at the convenience of the deacons, the water would be pumped out.

Sam caught on to the swimming bath under the stage, but did not mention it to any one.

"Good thing for the realistic drama," he remarked.

"Golly! how dat big niggan do go kerdop!" giggled Solomon.

Moses barked right in Jeremiah's nose, the crowd yelled and stamped and howled, and Sam began to play "A Life on the Ocean Wave."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake help me out, boss," cried Jeremiah. "Dis watah am as cold as ice."

"Ice s'pose so," said Sam.

"That's snow joke," commented Peter.

"Water'n old collar-button?"

"Stop yo' laughin' and help me out."

"Peter, go bail the corn out."

"What's he in for?"

"Interrupting the meeting."

"Six months."

"Stop yo' laughin'. I tole yo'," sputtered that indignant Jeremiah. "I don't want to stay yer all night."

He kicked me with his great big boot,

This horrid, cruel dad,

I fell in the gutter, oh, I should stutter,

It really was too bad.

So now I've shook sweet Susan,

And gone back on the girls,

And now I'm afraid I'll get an old maid,

All wrinkles and corkscrew curls."

This effusion tickled the gang, and Peter had to sing three or four more songs before the audience would let up on him.

"Don't tax the young gentleman too much," said Sam. "He is not feeling well, his great uncle has just died and left him a million dollars—to whistle for. Step right up now and examine this little article, the handiest



"Lemme get out ob dis, an' I palyze de hull lot ob yo'," he growled. They weren't letting him up, however. Instead of that they gave him another cold roll. The ball was getting almost too big to handle, but the gang put their shoulders to it and sent it over a fresh lot of snow.

"Witness the great regatta scene, with real water, a genuine hog's head and actual waves, biggest show ever in town."

That evening the hall was packed, for it wasn't often that a free show came to town, and everybody wanted to catch on to it.

Sam gave his electricity snap, Peter put Moses through his drill, and Solomon did a song and dance.

"Now, then, Jeremiah John, give us a breakdown on the bugle," said Sam.

Then he stepped back, standing on one of the loose planks and keeping it in place.

The big darky stepped forward, put his bugle to his lips, and began his solo.

Then Sam got off the end of that plank in a jiffy.

Down went Jeremiah's end, away went two or three other planks and Jeremiah disappeared.

Splash!

Right into the water—but he went up to the neck.

"Signer Jeremiah, the man fish, in his great aquatic act," cried Sam.

"This is real water, gentis," called out Peter. "There's no humbug about this."

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, boss, how came dat ver watah hyar?" sputtered Jeremiah, his head just sticking above the platform.

"The roof leaks," said Sam.

"That's for temperance exhibitions," remarked Peter.

Sam invited four big countrymen upon the platform, and they pulled Jeremiah from his impromptu bath-tub, and then nailed down the planks.

Poor Jeremiah John went off to change his wet clothes, and then Sam started in again.

"Now, ladies and gentis, we'll go on with the show, and after that will come our great sale, not a sale over the flashing waves below me, but a sale, a—a—l—e sale, place where you buy things, don't you know, you pay your money and I take my choice. Solomon, tinkle your grand piano while Peter warbles."

Solomon twanged away on his banjo for a few minutes, and then Peter came to the front and relieved his pent-up motions in the following ditty:

"Oh, I loved my simple Susan,

More than any one could tell;

She had red hair, her face was fair,

She was an awful swell.

She owned a block of houses,

She lived in splendid style.

You can bet your boots, I was up to roots,

For I was mashed upon her pile.

I went to see her every night,

And stayed till twelve o'clock,

I had my eyes upon the prize.

Likewise that brown stone block.

I told her that I loved her,

And asked her for her hand,

When up came her dad, so awful bad,

And now I have to stand.

thing you ever saw. Saves time, labor and hard words, and only costs a trifle.

"Ten cents is all I ask for this combination, gold prize soap, stain eradicator and bluing powder, makes washing a pleasure and housework a delight. I'm going to sell every lady in this town a package of it before I leave, and those that won't buy will have a package given to 'em. I'm going to introduce the thing, somehow, you can bet."

"Ten cents for this house-keeper's friend. Why, you can't buy a good cigar for that much, nor for three times as much, sometimes. Ten cents is nothing. Who would ever miss ten cents. You spend that much in beer every day. Walk right up and examine. No extra charge if you buy more than one package. I'm bound to sell this stuff and I'd as lief sell you a hundred boxes as one little rather maybe."

Sam's saucy ways caught the crowd, and when ten o'clock came he had disposed of everything he had brought into the hall.

Then he gave them an extra show, promised to be on hand the next night, and sent everybody home happy.

The next night he was ready for the crowd, having laid in a lot of new goods, and the way they were rattled off was a caution to old fogies.

Sam and Peter stuck to that town till twelve o'clock on Saturday night, and when they drove away on Monday morning folks asked them to come again and stay longer.

"Oh, I'll be around when the summer breezes blow,"



said Sam. "Over the river, dears; I'll meet you at the bridge; skip the creek; get up, mules!" and with crackling of whips and blowing of horns the equipage swept out of town.

At the next place, some ten miles away, Sam found a stranded minstrel company, the receipts at the door not having been enough to satisfy the demands of the rapacious hotel keepers.

The manager had skipped by starlight, presumably to get money enough to take his troupe away, but more probably to save his own skin.

Troupe, baggage and instruments, were all at the hotel, and a sad lot they were all together.

The minstrels were sad eyed, the baggage was all broken up, the horns were blown out, the fiddles all unstrung, and the drums dead beat.

When Sam saw the disconsolate crowd, he scratched his head, consulted Peter, and finally called the leader of the band into his room, and said:

"See here, Ferguson, I'm going to make a deal with you fellows. If you'll join my show I'll pay your board and a dollar a day all around as long as I stay in this town."

"Who's going to pay our last week's bills?" asked the leader.

"This isn't my day for answering conundrums, and I give it up. What do you say?"

"How long will you be in town? You might not stay more than one night."

"Maybe you want me to give you a certainty," said Sam. "Well, I can't do it, my son. I don't know what sort of chaps you are. Now I give a free show. You can go ahead and give an opposition one if you like, but I'm betting odds on my drawing the biggest crowd."

"Well, let's have a rehearsal and you can see what we can do."

"All right, Ferguson. Let her get!"

Sam and Peter met the half dozen minstrels at the hall, and the boys began to show what they could do.

After a few minutes Sam said in disgust:

"Well, I don't wonder you fellows busted! Your jokes need shaving bad. Now I tell you what you can do. You can all sing pretty well, that is, you can make a noise and that's what I want. I'll write you some new songs, you can sing your old choruses, and the whole band can play. Next, we don't want any burned cork. The day for that is past."

The energetic young fellow then went to work, rehearsed a new programme, and after four or five hours of hard work got his men in shape.

Then he billed that town away up, gave a concert on the hotel steps, covered the snow with dodgers and promised all sorts of things.

"Come and see the original and only Sam Smart tonight at Bolt's Opera House," he shouted. "All new talent, all new jokes and nothing to pay. A dollar's worth of fun for nothing. Come and laugh and then take in the great sale. A gold watch given to everybody who buys a paper of pins. Satin-lined collars given to every deadhead. A silver bell provided for every old joke. We take the cake, come and get a slice."

The hall was packed long before eight o'clock, and then everything was ready, up went the curtain.

In a semi-circle on the stage sat the six minstrels, with Sam on one end Peter on the other and Jeremiah in the middle, the only black face in the whole lot.

"Peter," cried Sam, "why is this crowd like a target?"

"Because it has a black center and a white ring around it, I suppose."

"Why are these boys like a widow just married again?"

"Because they've left off their black!"

"No."

"Because they've got a new partner?"

"Guess again."

"What is it?"

"Why, it's because they're looking real Smart. Sam Smart, of course. All together now for the overture."

After the overture the whole gang sang a chorus of Sam's composition, Sam and Peter did a song and dance, while everybody joined in the chorus, and then Sam, Peter, Solomon and his cat, Moses the dog, Jerry the mule, Sam's electric machine, Jeremiah and the rest of the mob gave a combination exhibition.

Sam sandwiched in the show with little sales of odds and ends till finally there was more sale than exhibition, and at last nothing but sale.

"Say," said one old countryman, "I hain't seen you put up no paper o' pins yet. I want one."

"None sold this evening, sir; all given out," said Sam.

"Ain't ye got none?"

"No, sir."

"Well, ye said ye'd give a gold watch to every feller what bought a paper of pins, an' I want one."

"All right, sir. When we have the pins we'll sell you some, and give you the watch."

"When will that be?"

"When we're a good deal greener than we are at present," warbled Sam. "Tra-la-la, Old Innocence. Go get a hair cut and clear out your brain."

Everybody laughed, and Sam rattled off a lot of nonsense, selling goods, however, as fast as he talked, and keeping his eyes open for trade all the time.

The result was that the show was a success, and his sale a triumph, and the hall was packed for four or five nights running.

"Will you pay our back bills if we'll go with you?" asked Ferguson, as Sam had christened him, though his real name was something else.

"No, sir, I'm not paying anybody's old bills. I'll give you each five dollars a week and all expenses, and that's all I will do. You're sure of your money, and that's more than you've ever been before. You can take my offer or leave it."

"Well, now are we going to get out of the town if we don't settle up?"

"Let your manager do that. He contracted for the bill and ought to pay it."

Finally Sam got up a big benefit for the hotel keeper, charged admission, packed the house, made lots of money for himself, paid the landlord all that was owing him, hired an extra sleigh and left the town after a week's stay, taking the minstrels with him.

It was harder to amuse a crowd in a hall than one in the street, and Sam did wisely in taking the minstrels with him, as his receipts showed.

He was able to pay the extra expenses out of the extra money that came in from his increased sales, and did even better than before he had the minstrel annex to his show.

"The weather isn't too bad for Samuel yet," he remarked, "and when he gets left it'll be in the bone-yard, out of the back door of a hearse."

## CHAPTER XVI.

EVERYTHING was on runners with Sam Smart just about this time, literally and metaphorically.

His business was just booming, and went along like a boy on skates.

In every town he visited he made lots of money, and never stayed less than two or three nights.

He gave a dandy show for nothing, and sold good goods at reasonable rates, and that's where he caught on every time.

The minstrels, the cat, the dog, the trick mule, the electric machine, Sam, Peter and the two coons, made a first class combination, and never failed to collar the cracker.

One day Sam entered a regular old-fashioned town, stuck away in the midst of a lot of hills, miles from any railroad, but having a pretty big population.

There were two or three stores, three churches, a town hall, a post office, one big hotel, and a lot of houses scattered all around without the slightest regard to street lines.

No show had been there in years, and when Sam came along and told them that he was going to entertain them for nothing, the news was all over town in half an hour.

The hall was packed as full as it would hold, and the audience was ready for anything.

The full band played a rattling selection, Sam, Peter and Jeremiah got off a lot of jokes and then all hands sang a chorus in a way that hit the bull's eye.

Nearly an hour was spent in the opening exercises, and then the stage was cleared, a table brought forward and Sam opened the ball.

"Now, then, fellow-citizens, we have amused you, and now we propose to show you what we've got in the way of high class, low-price goods, going at laughable prices, but all warranted up to high water mark."

"Here you have a bang up silver watch, sold for one dollar, can be used for a time-piece, slang-shot, snuff-box, needle-case, card-receiver, or to throw at the cats."

"Whoever heard of a watch going for a dollar? Why, the worst old brass case, clock work, given-away-with-a-suit-of-clothes, take-an-hour-to-wind-em-up watch costs more than that."

"You see I'm a philanthropist and I'm giving away these watches for a dollar. They ain't full jeweled solid silver cases, split seconds, weather proof balance or anything of the sort, but just an easy-going, every day reliable watch with no frills."

"These watches are warranted for two years and can be depended on, also good for cracking walnuts, firing at burglars or hanging up your uncle, and they only cost a dollar. You can't buy a clock for that."

Sam disposed of a dozen of the watches which were sold at a sacrifice, and then soaked it to the gang on tooth paste, shoe blacking, hair tonic and toilet soap.

"Who wants a nutmeg grater, gents? This is a great state and so everybody wants a grater. Here you have 'em, ten cents apiece and a nutmeg thrown in. No danger of swallowing these graters, as they have a life line attachment which enables you to pull 'em up in a jiffy. Used by all the celebrities, Mary Anderson, Henry Irving and Patsey Bolivar. Will grate wooden nutmegs as well as the genuine kind. I mace say so, because I know, you'll be in clover if you buy one."

"Now, here we have a clothes-wringer, an article that it's a positive pleasure to use, no more exertion required than to flirt your handkerchief, and yet it just knocks the water a flying and almost hangs the clothes on the line for you."

"Every good looking lady in this town ought to have one, the handsomer she is, the cheaper I'll sell it to her. Step right up here and get one before we sell out. Old wringers bought, and new ones given in exchange. You won't have any other after you get this. All the queen's washing goes through one of our wringers. Twenty-five cents and a cake of soap included, the cheapest bargain ever offered."

"Next, we have our good-in-any-climate soap, best thing in the world to drive away tramps."

"Load up your old shot gun with a cake of this

soap and let her go. Tramps hate the very sight of soap, this'll scatter 'em. Five cents a cake and a bottle of cologne throw in. Sold a gross of these last night to a grocer, yes, sir, I said a gross, sir, to a grocer, if you can tell a grosser story than that I'd like to hear it."

"Now, in order to keep you in good humor, I will sing you a little ballad, and then I'm going to offer you some of the most astounding bargains you ever heard of:

"Is it worth a man's while to worry and fret,  
And wish for a lot of things that he can't get?  
I don't think so.

Will wishing bring fortune to every one's door,  
Is it right when you've plenty to ask for some more?  
I don't think so.

Will lots of fine clothes and a hatful of cash  
Take a man into Heaven straight at a dash?  
Will pretty girls ever stop trying to mash?  
I don't think so.

"Will England ever let Ireland alone?  
Will King Calico ever buy back his throne?  
I don't think so.

Will Sullivan ever get licked in a fight?  
Will the time ever come when two wrongs make one  
right?  
I don't think so.

Will Ireland and Italy ever agree?  
Do Boston baked beans ever grow on a tree?  
Do you think you will ever get tired of me?  
I don't think so.

"However, ladies and gents, I'm getting tired of doing all the talking, so I'll give somebody else a chance. Who says they want to buy something? Speak up, don't be shy. Peter, pass out those lace fans. Every lady that buys one gets a prize. Here they go, and the prettiest girl in the hall gets one for nothing."

That's the way Sam talked to 'em, and it went down as slick as grease, and nobody kicked.

All hands were buying, and he could sell things fast enough, no matter what it was.

Stove-lifters, fancy soap, clothes-pins, wire bustles and music-boxes went with equal celerity, and shoe blacking found as ready a market as fresh-roasted peanuts or sugar-coated pop-corn.

Now and then a song and dance, a cluster of jokes or a funny act would be thrown in gratis, but that only tickled the crowd and made business more brisk.

Finally the people began to go, and then Sam rattled off a lot of stuff at little or nothing, keeping up a volley of nonsensical talk that fetched out the coppers and sent everybody home as happy as larks.

"We roped 'em in fine to-night, hey, Petey?" said Sam, when he and his partner had turned in.

"Take your Davy on it, Samuel. Guess they hadn't seen a show in five years."

"Guess they'll stand some more of us too?"

"Yes, you can catch 'em solid for three or four nights, I reckon."

"Seems to be a pretty good-sized colored population here, too, Pete."

"Yes, plenty of black and tans."

"We must look out for prayer meetings, for that coon of ours will be sliding off to them."

"Yes, we must keep our optics open."

Jeremiah, by the way, did not sleep in the hotel, which was tolerably well filled up, but in a room fitted up in the barn.

It was airy and roomy, had a carpet on the floor, and was as stylish as any coon could wish even if it was a part of the barn and you had to walk past a lot of stalls before you got to it.

There was one window, and this rattled in the wind, not being particularly tight, but Jeremiah John did not care for that.

There was no curtain to it, either, and you could look right out upon the barn-yard, but that did not bother our colored friend any more than the rattling.

He got into bed, having no light but that which the moon gave, covered himself up and proceeded to go to sleep.

Presently he heard a deep voice, right under the window, pronounce his name:

"Jeremiah, Jeremiah."

"Wondah who dat is wants me at dis time ob night?"

"Jeremiah, Jeremiah John," said that deep and husky voice.

"Who dat? Wha' yo' wan' ob me?" called out the coon.

"Jeremiah," and the window began to rattle.

"Wondah who de dooce dat am a-callin' me? Specs I wo'k habd 'nuff in de day times not to be sturbed aftah I get to sleep. Who dat, an' what yo' want?"

Again that terrible voice pronounced his name, and our poor coon began to get scared.

He sat up in bed, glanced toward the window, and nearly fainted.

His wool straightened out, his jaw fell and his knees shook till the bed creaked.



Looking in the window was a great head with big eyes and an awful mouth, looking ready to close upon him.

"Jeremiah!" the awful object said once more, shaking the window.

"For de Lawd's sake, de ole debbil got me now for shuah!" gasped the frightened moke.

"Jeremiah!"

"G'way dar, ol' debbil, g'way f'om me. Yo' don' wan' me 'tall. It's some oder fellah."

Now the window was not more than three feet from the bed, and poor Jeremiah thought he was gone for sure.

"Jeremiah!" groaned the unknown thing outside.

"And most scared to death."

"What ails ye, anyhow?"

"Oh, boss, I done see debbil jes' dis minnit. He put him head inter de winder an' call fo' me loud as thundah! I ain' done nuffin' fo' de ol' debbil ter come aftah me. I see a membah ob de chu'ch."

"Seen the devil, hey?"

"Yas'r, he done tick his head inter de winder out dere in de bann, an' holler for me jes' as nateral."

"Come and show us."

"No, boss, I dassen't go out dere while he am 'round, fo' nuffin'. He git me, suah? Yo' go out an' dribe him away fus'."

The boss got a big lantern and went out to the

"Well, if that don't beat anything I ever heard, he, he!"

Then they all yelled and howled and screamed, and wanted to treat each other, it was so funny.

Jeremiah skipped back to his dry chamber and tumbled into bed, as mad as blazes.

"H'm! dey kin laff much as dey like!" he growled, "but it wahn't no ol' call what scared me like dat! It war de ol' debbil, hoofs, horns, tail an' all, an' I took my onf on it!"

"Specs I git all broke up ober a lilly calf what don' hurt nobody? Well, I guess not! Dat war de debbil, sure 'nuff, an' de on'y t'ing wha' sabs me was pra'r, yas'r, pra'r an' pentance, an' ef yo' hab dem yo' gits dar eb-ry time."



"Let her go, brudder," he cried to the coon who held the end of the toboggan. The brother let her go, and then Jeremiah and the wenches went flying down that hill at the dizziest kind of speed. "Ain' dis some!" muttered Jeremiah. "Wall, I reckon."

"G'way! Don' know yo' 'tall. 'Tain' dis col'd man yo' want 'tall. Guess yo' come to de wrong house. I see a membah ob de church an' don' hab nuffin' to do wif yo'."

The big eyes, the horrible mouth and the awful voice came closer, the horrible face was pressed right against the pane.

Down fell the lower part of the sash on the floor, and the thing stuck in its head.

"Jeremiah!" it wailed.

"Oh, hen! fo' goodness sakes alibe, glory hallelujah, I see a gone coon fo' shuah!"

Then Jeremiah flew out of that bed, dashed out of the room and went flying through the barn with nothing on but his shirt.

He thought he heard the creature calling after him, and that made him go faster.

Out of the barn, across the snow and into the house he ran, barefooted and bareheaded, with the mercury away down below the line.

The house was not shut up, the landlord and one or two boarders still being in the office.

Jeremiah suddenly appeared amongst them, trembling like a leaf, and clad only in his shirt.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, ge'men, sabs me f'om dat ol' debbil!" he gasped.

"Why, it's the big nig!"

barn, followed by the crowd, Jeremiah in the rear. That coon's prince of darkness turned out to be a half-grown calf that had been shut out in the cold and wanted to get in-doors.

Jeremiah's imagination had transformed its utterances into his own name, and his terror did the rest.

The poor bovine's big eyes, open countenance and corn-husk voice, his hairy skin and his hot breath, had changed him from a simple calf to a horrible fiend in poor Jeremiah's mind.

When the landlord and the others discovered what it really was they laughed themselves sick.

"Scared to death by a calf! Well, that beats all!"

"Thought it was Old Nick come after him, ho-ho-ho!"

"Called him Jeremiah, too. Well, I never!"

Then all hands exchanged grins and laughed so loud that the poor calf let out a tremendous bellow and made himself scarce.

"There goes your devil, Mr. Jeremiah," said the landlord. "Guess you can go to bed now. Scared by a calf, ho, ho!"

"Thought the old boy had come to fetch him, ha, ha, ha!"

Sam heard all about Jeremiah's alarm in the morning, and although he did not indulge in the tumultuous hilarity that had characterized the landlord's mirth, he enjoyed the joke, and thought it was one of the best things yet.

Jeremiah would not give in that it was anything less than the fiend himself who had paid him that nocturnal visit, and he intended to use the incident the next time he went to prayer meeting.

During Sam's stay in this town Jeremiah got acquainted with a lot of coons, and one afternoon they invited him to go out tobogganing with them, a slide having been started by the high-toned nigs of the place.

Jeremiah felt as proud as Lucifer when the coons gave him this invitation, but he proceeded to put on more airs than a government mule.

"I spec yo' know, sah, dat de bes' sabsity weas raglah close when dey go on toboggans?" said he. "I didn' expect to indulge in de spate when I lef' home, an' my unif'o'm am in New Yo'k."

"Dat am all right, Mistah Smig, dey hab all dese tings down to de sto' an' yo' kin take yo' pick."

"Do de ge'men ob yo' club all weah de reg'lation coshume?"

"Suttlinly! Why wouldo' dey? Dis am no com-



mon's'ciety, sah. We ah decream ob de col'd pop-lation."

That struck Jeremiah just where he lived, and he promised to be at the toboggan slide promptly at three that afternoon.

Then he went down to the principal store in the place and bought a suit of blanket stuff, the giddiest to be found, squandering his hard-earned wealth to the amount of about five dollars, and getting stuck at that.

He looked like a cross between an Esquiman and a circus clown when he was rigged up, but he thought he was just too elegant to exist.

"Reckon dey ain' any ob dem nigs wha' can put on de style I kin," he remarked complacently.

Then he sailed off to the top of a high hill where the high-toned coons had already assembled, and were getting ready to descend the dizzy slide.

The latter was in fine condition, nothing having been down that day, and anybody going down was warranted to feel as if he had been shot out of a cannon at the rate of a thousand miles a minute.

There were lots of dusky Venuses about and Jeremiah got introductions to all of them.

"Hab yo' eber been down de slide, Miss Julia?" he said to one saucy coon. "It am de perfection ob delight. Allow me to look yo' down once."

"I shall be awful scared I know, Mistah Smiff."

"No yo' won't, dere am no danger 'tall, not half as much as dey is on a sled."

"Won' yo' took me, Mistah Smiff?"

"Took me, too, Mistah Smiff. I se dyln' to go down, I is."

"Certainly, I took yo' all," said Jeremiah.

"Hab yo' eber steered a toboggan, sah?" asked Jeremiah's friend, as he came up, drawing one of the Indian cutters after him.

"Steer a toboggan!" cried that moke. "Yas'r, I use to earn forty dollahs a week in New Yo'k, steerin' dem tings at de Polar Groun's. Co'se I knows how to steer dem."

"Am dat so?"

"Co'se it am."

"Oh, den dat's a'right. I was gwine to show yo', but if yo' know how dere am no use."

"No, sah, not a bit."

Then Jeremiah seated several wenches on one of the new fangled affairs, as big as life.

It was pretty full, for some of the giddy dears had youngsters in their laps or arms, and Jeremiah had no more than room enough to hang on behind.

"Let her go, brudder," he cried to the coon who held the end of the toboggan.

The brother let her go, and then Jeremiah and the wenches went flying down that hill at the dizzyest kind of speed.

"Ain' dis some?" muttered Jeremiah. "Wall, I reckon."

## CHAPTER XVII.

Away they went down the hill, Jeremiah John and those lady coons, as merry as could be.

"Look er dem go! Ain' dey jes' a-spinnin'!"

"Spees dat coon know mo' 'bout runnin' dem tings dan I fought he did."

"Golly, ain' dey jus' hummin'!"

It would have been all right if Jeremiah had not tried to show off.

Pride always antedates an upset and that was the trouble in this case.

Jeremiah concluded to show those country niggers what a colored gentleman from the city was able to do when he set about it.

He was just going to show them some steering with frills on it, and open their eyes a bit.

So he undertook to take a short cut when he got about half way down the hill.

Quick as a flash the toboggan swung around sideways, struck against a snow bank, and upset in a jiffy.

Those wenches were spilled out in the snow quicker than seat.

Some of them stopped where they first landed, but others went rolling down hill like footballs.

One of the kids went head first into the snow, and all you could see of him was his heels.

Another went sliding down hill on his hind end, yelling like a murdered pig.

The fattest wench of all landed right across Jeremiah's spinal column and pinned him down as effectually as if a spike had been driven through him.

Then such a caterwauling as there arose!

"Fo' de lan' sake, my neck is broke!" yelled one leather-lunged damsel, three shades blacker than charcoal.

"Take yo' big foot off my jaw, Hannah Johnson!"

"You're scrushing my ribs togedder. Mary 'Lizabeth Tomkins, jis' yo' stop o' dat!"

Kiss squalling, wenches screaming, Jeremiah grunting, and spectators laughing.

It was the funniest thing yet for everybody except Jeremiah.

"G'off my back, Julia Jones! Ain' yo' got no sense?"

The gentle Julia got up, with wrath in her eye, but before she could chastise Jeremiah for his impudence, she slipped and went sliding down hill like a female cyclone.

"Hol' on, hol' on! I isn't gwine dat way!" she yelled.

She was going that way, however, and she continued to go till she brought up at the bottom in a big snow drift.

The fathers, brothers, husbands and steady company of those colored ladies now appeared on the scene and made it warm for Jeremiah.

It was a very cold day for that pious coon, too, and he felt like hiring a boy to swear for him for the rest of the day.

"Wha' fo' yo' upset my da'ter in de snow?"

"Ain' yo' got no mo' sense, yo' big fool niggah! Dat lilly babe coteh um deff!"

"Fought yo' knowed how to steer de toboggan, yo' bruck loater!"

"Ef my wife broke her leg I git de law on yo', sho's yo' bo'n!"

"Less took it out ob de niggah now!"

Then those wrathful coons proceeded to take it out of that coon's skin, and the way they tanned him was lovely to see.

He did not even have time to open the exercises with prayer, they went at him so sudden.

First one big coon blacked one eye for him and then gave him the mate to it, for the sake of symmetry.

Then another swelled his jaw to twice its size and proceeded to chew his ear, but was interrupted by another coon who wanted that feast himself.

They all had some pleasant little attention to pay him and when they got through with him he looked as if he had been through a saw mill and cut up into slabs.

When those nigs had had all the fun they wanted out of Jeremiah, they let him go and proceeded to rescue their wives, sisters, sweethearts, infants and daughters from their snowy graves.

Jeremiah went sadly away, feeling that life no longer had any charms for him while the darkies continued their recreations.

Not even seeing the very first toboggan that went down after that upset all its passengers could allay poor Jeremiah's heartache.

He never even grunted, for he never smiled, but went on his lonely way back to the hotel feeling as if he would like to take himself down to the river and jump in, if it wasn't so cold.

He turned up at the hotel in half an hour, and Sam was the first person to see him.

"Hallo, Jeremiah, where on earth have you been?"

"On de toboggan slide, boss," said Jeremiah, not caring to be more explicit in his explanations.

"Oh, you have, eh? I didn't know but that you had been blown up in a powder mill and hadn't had time to pick up all the pieces yet."

This was adding insult to injury, but Jeremiah bore it all with meekness, and went into the house with a face that would have been a fortune to an undertaker.

"Dat am allus de way," he remarked to himself.

"When a po' man meet wif misfortune, eberybody am down on him."

With this philosophical observation Jeremiah went off to make repairs, leaving Sam laughing at the recollection of the ridiculous appearance that glum coon had presented on his return from the slide.

"If that moke indulges in any more imported winter sports," he remarked, "we will have to exhibit him in sections, or call him the boneless wonder."

Jeremiah managed to make himself half-way presentable before business began that night, and Sam rattled away as usual, striking the crowd pretty hard and just coaxing the dollars out of their pockets.

The next morning that big coon felt a good deal better, and was standing out in front of the hotel when he espied Miss Julia, the young lady of the elephantine proportions, coming along the road.

She had a big clothes basket full of clean linen on top of her head, and she was picking her way over the snowy walk as mincingly as though it were paved with eggs, and there was a dollar fine for every one she broke.

"Good mo'nin, Miss Julia," said Jeremiah, politely.

Whether it was that Miss Julia did not fancy being seen in the high-toned occupation of carrying home the week's washing, or whether she resented the spill in the snow that Jeremiah had given her the day previous, we cannot state.

Most likely it was the latter, but at all events she treated Jeremiah as cool as an ice-house.

"Good mo'nin, Miss Julia," said Jeremiah once more, lifting his hat.

"Don' wanter hab nuffin' to say to yo' 'tall, yo' common niggah," snorted Miss Julia.

Jeremiah wasn't going to be sat upon in that manner, however.

"Was de washwoman sick dat she couldn' brung de close home she se'l, 'stead ob makin' yo' brung dem?" he asked. "Spec it mus' be a awful job fo' a lady like yo' wha' don' do no wo'k."

The fact of the matter was, Miss Julia was the wash-lady herself, but she thought it was awful nice in Jeremiah to think otherwise.

"Yas, de lady wha' does my washin' gen'rally fatches um home, but she am jes' drove so luhd dat I tuck pity on her," she replied, in a voice as soft as melted butter.

"Don' yo' fluk yo'd bettah lemme help yo' car'y it?" said Jeremiah, stepping down. "All dat weight on yo' head spoil yo' bootul complexion."

"Oh, Mistah Smiff, yo' am too kin', 'deed yo' is, I couldn' fluk ob axin' yo'."

All the same she would have been awful mad if Jeremiah had taken her at her word.

He did not, but helping her set the basket down said, in maple sugar accents:

"I reckon ef yo' took hol' ob one han'le an' me de oder, we could tote dem close jes' as slick as 'lasses."

"Law me, Mistah Jones, how funny dat would look to see a gen'an like yo' totin' home de washin'," giggled Miss Julia.

"Reckon ef a lady like yo' kin do it, Miss Julia, it am all right fo' me help yo'," retorted Jeremiah gallantly.

That settled the business.

Miss Julia grabbed one end of the basket, Jeremiah caught on to the other and off they sailed.

A light snow had fallen during the night and hid the icy places on the walk.

It was not long before Jeremiah struck one of these man-traps, slipped, gave the basket a yank and slid for two yards.

Miss Julia was nearly hauled off her feet but she let go her grip and so escaped an upset.

"Scuse me," said Jeremiah. "De walk am putty slickery dis mo'nin'."

"He-he, Mistah Smiff, yo' mos' pulled me down on de walk," giggled Miss Julia. "Fought suah yo was gwine to fall on yo' head. Wouldn't dat been funny, yah-ha!"

Jeremiah did not think it would, but he said nothing.

Miss Julia annexed her number ten hand to the handle of the basket and off they went once more. They had gone about a hundred feet when an accident occurred.

This time Miss Julia slipped.

She gyrated wildly in the air with one big foot, tried to balance herself on the other, and let out a screech that could have been heard all over town.

She didn't lose her balance, however.

Jeremiah lost his, nevertheless.

Miss Julia hung on solid to that basket during her struggle to maintain her equilibrium, just as though that could save her from falling.

Perhaps it did, but it operated otherwise on Jeremiah.

It yanked him off his feet, and he turned a twister and flopped right on top of that basket of clothes.

His feet collided with Miss Julia's fairy pedals, and down she went like a decayed house.

Of course, she couldn't fall on the snow.

No, she had to land right on Jeremiah's spinal column, and with no light weight, either.

The clothes-basket couldn't stand any such nonsense, and it dissolved partnership with itself at once.

"Ugh! Get off my back, yo' clumsy niggah!" growled Jeremiah John, forgetting all his politeness in a moment.

"Ain' niggah any mo'n yo' is!" snarled Miss Julia. "Niggah yo' ownse'l! Sha'n't get up till I get good and ready, so dere!"

"G'off, I tol' you, drat yo' hombly pieter!"

That started Miss Julia in a jiffy.

She jumped up and began to give it to that coon in the choicest terms.

"Yo' am no ge'man, yo' am jes' a common whitewash niggah?"

"H'm! I kin affo'd to sen' my washin' out anyhow."

"Yo'm jes' on'y fit to black boots an' run to de do'."

"Ef I was yo', I let m'se'f out to de moonsims."

"Don' yo' talk ter me, yo' bruck and tan coon!"

"I se shamed ter talk ter yo', so I is. Rackon dey flah me out ob de chu'ch ef dey know it."

"Neber was in a chu'ch in yo' life, less yo' wen' dere to steal sumfin'."

"G'out, yo' big mouf wench. Yo' mos' broke my back."

"Jes' glad ob it. Wish twar yo' neck, niggah."

There stood those two angry mokes, the ruined clothes basket between them, snarling and jawing at one another like a couple of cats.



That made twice that that fat African woman had sat on Jeremiah's back and it made him mad. "Bet yo' jes' done dat a puppus. Dere's yo' ol' close basket. Yo' kin take it to de lady yo' se'f. Hope she make yo' do de washin' ober again fo' nuffin'. Good-mor'nin' washwoman."

"Don' yo' dar wish me good-mo'nin', yo' tramp niggah. I tell yo' boss to look out fo' yo', an' see yo' don' steal him waggin'."

"Huh! Nobody steal yo', I reckon. Yo'm too ugly fo' dat."

"Yo' jes' wait till I get home. I tol' my fader on yo', an' yo' get de worstest lickin' yo' eber had. See if yo' don'."

Jeremiah only guffawed and started to return to

He had a full house to witness his little exhibition and it made him mad.

"Guess if I want sit down in de snow to cool off I kin do it wifout all yo' fellahs laffin at me," he remarked, as he limped away.

That was too much, and the whole gang broke into a roar of merriment.

"De nex' time I goes out ob my way to be p'lite to dat wench, I reckon she foun' it out," the poor moke remarked.

Then he went away and did not show himself all day.

Sam left that town the next morning, taking all his train with him, and lighted upon another one five or six miles off, where he finished out the week with good business.

"Good ebeniu', boss," said that pious coon, "I won't be back hery early."

"Where are you going?" inquired Sam, not a little astonished.

"Gwine ter meetin', boss."

"Did Peter tell you you might?"

"No, sah."

"Did I?"

"No, sah, but I'se gwine, all de same. Get up!"

The driver snapped his whip, the horses started off at a gallop, and away went the coons rejoicing.

"That nig is getting pretty big for his shoes," muttered Sam, as the sleigh disappeared around a turn in the road. "He needs toning down a



He was just going to show them some steering with frills on it, and open their eyes a bit. So he undertook to take a short cut when he got about half way down the hill. Quick as a flash the toboggan swung around sideways, struck against a snow bank, and upset in a jiffy.

the hotel, leaving Miss Julia to get along the best way she could with her busted basket.

He forgot the ice beneath the snow, however. It was waiting for him, though, and it soon got in its fine work.

A fine glassy bit of ice under the snow caught that coon's big feet, tripped them up and sent him skating on his back in the prettiest style imaginable.

Jeremiah did not know whether his back was busted or not, but he did know that somebody was laughing at him.

He cleaned the snow off the walk for about ten feet, and performed the slide act with elegance and dexterity.

"Yah-ha! Serbe yo' right, yo' big fool niggah!" "Hallo, Jeremiah John! Been getting full again this morning?"

"Go it, old Woollyhead, you're immense on the slide!"

"Fo' de lan' sakes, how fader kin skate!"

Jeremiah picked himself up, and beheld on one side Miss Julia and two or three coons, on the other Sam, Peter, Solomon and two or three of the minstrels.

The minstrel snap seemed to pay first-rate and he resolved to keep the boys with him as long as there was any money in that line, an arrangement which suited all hands.

This last town was a pretty lively place, and it wasn't long before Jeremiah became acquainted with half of the colored brothers and sisters in it.

On the second night of Sam's stay, there was a prayer meeting in the colored church, and, as usual, it was about two or three miles away on the edge of the town.

Jeremiah found out that there was a sleigh full of coons going over in the early evening, and he concluded to make one of the party.

He did not consider it necessary to acquaint Sam with his intentions, having got into an independent state of mind, and caring nothing for the boss' likes or dislikes.

In fact, he was so careless about it that he made no disguise whatever about the affair, but openly avowed his intention of going to the meeting whether it put Sam out or not.

More than that, Sam was standing on the hotel piazza when the sleigh load of coons drove up, and Jeremiah got in and took his seat.

"If I don't look out, he'll own the whole establishment before long."

Jeremiah arrived at the church just as the congregation was assembling and he proceeded to make himself pretty numerous as usual.

The minister himself could not have put on more lugs than Jeremiah did, and, in fact, he did not put on half as many, for that big coon just bossed the meeting.

As soon as the choir had done singing up jumped Jeremiah and shouted out in his big voice:

"Oh, Lawd, bress all dese chillen ob light an' make deir habits white as de dribblin' snow what lies all around on de groun' to-night, an' if dey don' wantar come inter de fo', jes' shubble 'em in wif de snow plow ob de gospul."

"Gadder all de chillen to yer bosom, Lawd, an' if dey gets huffy jes' box deir yers an' tol' 'em ter keep quiet. Dat's de way to do wif dem coons."

"Brudders and sistahs, am yo' habits white as de snow, or am dey brack like de mud ob de street? Yo' bottuh flin' out pretty sudden or de ol' debbin' come snoopin' 'round, an' he tell putty quick what stuff you was made ob."

"Tol' yo' what, bre'dren, dere am a great time comin' fo' dem wha' blebe on de Lawd, an' fo' dem



wha' don', dere's gwine ter be de aw'f'les' fuss yo' eber see. De ol' debbil am jus' gwine ter come wif him kyarts an' driers an' jis' tote 'em off like dey cary' off de snow an' dump 'em in de riber.

"Dat riber ain' like de riber yo' eber see, bred- ren. It am full ob flah an' smoke, an' dem wha' gets frowed into it don' hab no plenis, I tol' yo'."

"Les' sing' for our improbement de sebenty-fl' hymn, singin' all de wusses, an' jes' put yo' hant in 'em fo' de Lawd likes singin' an' de ol' debbil don', not fo' a cent."

"Oh gadder up de chillen in de gospel kyart,  
Hi, glory, glory,  
Hab de lub ob de Lawd in yo' heart,  
Ho, glory, glory,  
I's gwine fo' to shout, I's gwine fo' to sing,  
Ho, glory, glory,  
Kase I'se got on de robe an' de weddin' ring,  
Hi, glory, glory."

Don' yo' pay no 'tention to Satan's chahms,  
Oh, glory, glory,  
But jump into de eberlastin' ahms,  
Oh, glory, glory,  
De riber am wide, but I'se gwine to cross,  
Hi, glory, glory,  
Hurry up brudders or yo'll be los',  
Hi, glory, glory."

Singing was Jeremiah's strong point, and he just whooped her up lively, making all hands join in he chorus, and nearly raising the roof.

He got tired after a while, and gave somebody else a show, the meeting going along on greased runners.

It was getting late, and Jeremiah was in the midst of a fervent exhortation when the driver of the sleigh sang out:

"Dat's a' right, brudder Smiff. Yo' kin call folks to come to de Lawd, but 'I yo' don' come to dis sleigh yo' get lef', I tol' yo'."

Jeremiah knew what it was to be left, and had had quite enough of it, and so he dusted out of that meeting-house pretty sudden.

The sleigh was already full, and Jeremiah had to sit in the hind end on the floor in a lot of straw, all the seats being occupied.

Away they went, and at the end of the first half mile struck a long hill.

The horses took their time in going up, and when they were nearly up the driver started them on at a lively rate.

They gave a jump and a snort. Jeremiah's feet struck the tail board of the sleigh with a bump.

Out it came, and at the next moment that coon was setting in the middle of the road while the sleigh disappeared down the hill.

Three miles from home, and no way to get there but walk!

What an outlook!

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THREE miles from home, the sleigh gone on without him, and two feet of snow on the ground.

That was the predicament of Jeremiah John Joseph.

He reached the top of the hill, after he had scrambled to his feet when he was thrown off the sleigh, just in time to see that vehicle going down, liketty clip.

"Hi, hol' on, stop a minnit! One ob yo' passengers am lef' behin'."

Either the driver could not or would not hear him, for the sleigh never stopped.

The laughing coons, the jingling sleigh bells, the snapping of the whip—all these could be heard, but not poor Jeremiah's shouts.

"Hi-hil, hol' on; wait fo' dis col'd man!" he shouted again, legging it after the sleigh.

He had taken but a few steps when he fell over a rut or something, and went down as solid as a hod of bricks.

"Whoa! Dat ain' de way to cotch up to 'um," he grunted, plowing the snow with his flat nose.

"Hol' on, dere; take dis yer passenger abo'd 'fore yo' go any farder."

The sleigh went a good deal further and consid- erably more so, and yet it did not stop.

The jingling bells, the laughter of the coons, the snapping of the whip, the clump, clump of the nag's feet on the snow, and the creaking of the sleigh grew fainter and fainter, and at last grew too indistinct to hear at all.

Jeremiah John had picked himself up after his second fall and once more started after that run- away vehicle.

He took another tumble after going a few yards, and still another after that, but though he was so good at tumbling he could not catch on, and the sleigh went ahead without him.

"Clar' to gracious! don' 'pear as ef I could ober go to meetin' wifout suffin' happenin'." I jes' b'lebe de ole debbil got a grutch agin me an' am tryin' his bestest fo' to zet hol' ob me, but I cheat um yit ef I hab to jine de Unumverslis' chu'ch."

The stars twinkled overhead and the snow glist-

tened under foot, but Jeremiah had no eyes for the beauties of nature, with a three mile walk before him, and he could not see anything romantic or picturesque about all this.

"Reckon it am all kase I wen' off spite ob what de boss say, but I don' ear' ef it am, if I kin on'y fin' a wagon gwine to town. Don' ear' fo' de boss, anyhow! He'm got altogedder too much to say, dese days!"

Not caring for what Sam said did not seem to mend the matter any, and Jeremiah trudged along, grumbling and growling and working himself up into a very unhappy frame of mind.

He reached the bottom of the hill without falling, more than half a dozen times more, and then set off on the level with somewhat better success.

The sleigh had long since passed out of sight and sound, and if the coons missed him they did not apparently think it was worth while to come back after him.

"Dat am de way wif some folks, de mo' yo' pray an' laboh wif dem, de less dey ear' fo' yo'. Dey ain' one ob dese coons dat I didn' pray fo', an' try to bring to de frone, an' now look at 'em! Dey jes' done go off an' lef' me fo' to hoof it back to de hotel all by my lones!"

"Talk ob de gratitood ob man! Dere ain' no sech ting! Dey jes' ear' fo' demselves, an' dat am all. Ef it war twenty mile, dey wouldn' ear'. Jes' hope de ole debbil cotch um all, ev'ry one, spite ob pray'rs an' preachin'. Serbe 'em right if he do."

But even consigning those careless coons to everlasting punishment could not bring the sleigh back, and Jeremiah tramped on, getting madder and madder.

To add to his enjoyment, the snow began to fall when he had walked about a mile, and it was no slight fall, either.

It whistled and whizzed all around him, sneaked in between his shirt and his skin, blew up his sleeves, sifted down into the tops of his shoes, and seemed trying to hunt out every part of his body.

It formed a nice little thatch on top of his hat, it piled itself upon his shoulders, it ran down the back of his neck, and, in short, made itself decidedly disagreeable.

He had not walked a quarter of a mile before he looked like an animated snow image, and only the warmth of his wrath prevented him from freezing into a solid mass in the middle of the road.

"Drat de snow! Why couldn' it wait till I got to de hotel, I wondah? Might flink de ole debbil sen' it jes' to bodder me, but I reckon dey don' hab very much snow down whar he lib, h'm! guess dey don'," and Jeremiah laughed explosively at his own little joke.

Tramp, tramp, tramp over the snow and through the snow and sometimes in the snow, when he fell down, went that poor coon, all white except the end of his nose, where the snow could not find a lodging, and all the while laying down the law to those negligent nigs who had brought all this dis- comfort upon him.

Of course it would not have been in the nature of things for that coon to go straight home with- out further mishap, and consequently he must needs get off upon the wrong road, and after trav- eling more than the required distance, bring up, all snowy and half frozen, at a tavern in another town.

"Dere am de hotel at las'," he remarked, as he stepped upon the piazza, shook the snow from him as much as possible and walked in.

There were strange faces all about, and the place itself did not look quite right.

There was a bar at one side of the room, and he did not remember that such an arrangement exist- ed in the office of his hotel.

"Well," said the clerk, "what do you want, blacky? It's time to shut up."

"Am de show ober?" asked Jeremiah, trying to recognize a familiar face.

"What show's that?"

"Marse Sam's show, ob co'se. Don' yo' know Marse Sam by dis time?"

"Who's he?"

"Who's him?" Why, Marse Sam Sma't, ob co'se. Who vo' spect?"

"They ain't no such pusson stopping here, ebony."

"Did dey go arter de show was ober?" asked Jeremiah, getting anxious.

"They never was any show here at all, coon."

"Wha' dat? No Sam Smart, no Petey Pocket, no Solomon? G'way, sah, yo'm foolin'." Mebby yo'll say yo' neber seed me nudder."

"No, I never did. Where'd you come from, any- how?"

"Why, Lor' sakes, I'se been yer fo' free days!"

"H'm, then mebbe you're the feller what's been stealing our chickens? We 'spected it was a nigger."

"Done steal no chickens 'tall!" protested Jere- miah. "I'se a membah ob de chu'ch, sah!"

"Well, you hain't been here no three days"

nuther you nor Sam Smart, whoever he is, nor Solomon nor any of those fellows."

"I'raps dis ain' de Fil Abenoo Hotel ob Hark- nis' Co'nahs, eider," said the coon, with an air of conviction.

"No, sir, it ain't; it's the Windsor Hotel ob Tomp- kins' Mills. The Corners is about five miles to the west. Ain't you been taking a little sutbin'?"

"Fo' de lan' sakes, ef I hain't done took de wrong road!" gasped Jeremiah. "Specs I mus' got los' in de storm. I'in I stay yer to-night?"

"Wall, we don't take niggers, but you can sleep in the barn if you like," said the landlord, coming forward. "Ye can't go over to the Corners to- night, I don't supposo."

"Reckon ef I kin pay fo' a room I'se got as much right to one as de nex' man," said Jeremiah, getting spunky. "Wha' yo' cha'ge?"

"Twenty dollars," said the landlord, thinking to get even with the coon.

"Dat's all right. I'll take a room, an' yo' kin put a flah in it. Am dere a baff room convenient?"

The landlord grinned, and then replied, as a clincher:

"Fellers coming without baggage are always re- quired to pay in advance."

All hands expected that this would stagger the coon, but the latter replied:

"Well, sah, ef yo'll sen' de po'tah to de station he'll fln' my trunks. Yo' don' 'spees I war gwine to tote 'em on my back, does yo'? P'raps yo' donno who I is. Wall, sah, I is de advance agent ob Sam Smaht's Minstrel Comp'ny, one ob de big- ges' concerns in de country. De boss be heah in de mo'nin'. We neber pay any bills till de services am done, yo' undahstan'?"

"Well, I guess it's all right," said the host. "Is Number Six empty, Dick?"

"I believe it is."

"Then let him have it."

"An' a flah, yo' undahstan'," put in Jeremiah. "I nebah sleep in a col' room in de wintah."

Everybody laughed, and Jeremiah got the best room in the house, with a fire in it, and all the luxuries of the season.

"Reckon dere'll be trouble in de mo'nin', ef I kean't get wo'd to de boss," muttered Jeremiah, as he sat in his room toasting his shins; "but I don' cah fo' dat. I wuz boun' ter sleep somewhar to- night, no mattah what I had to say."

Sam Smart did a good business that night, and when they turned in he and Pete had their chat as usual.

"That coon is getting fresher every day," re- marked Peter.

"He was pretty breezy this evening."

"And you're going to stand his nonsense when- ever he wants to give it to you, I suppose?"

"No; I'll discharge him in the morning when we leave."

In the morning, however, there was no Jere- miah to be seen, and Solomon reported that his father had not turned up all night.

"Guess he must have thought I was going to fire him out," remarked Sam, "and that's why he did not come back. Well, we can have one of the boys black up and sit on the wagon. He'll do better than that lazy coon."

"Where are you off to now?" asked the land- lord, as Sam settled his bill.

"To Tompkins' Mills. They tell me it's a lively place."

"Yes, lively for drinking," chuckled the land- lord. "Temperance folks never could get a hold in that town."

"Oh, well; I don't mind that," said Sam, and in half an hour he and his whole party started off for the Mills.

They arrived in about an hour, and Sam, driv- ing up to the chief hotel, stood up in his seat, blew a blast upon his trumpet, and cried out:

"Oh, yes, bet your boots, don't make any mis- take, this is the great and only Sam Smart and his traveling menagerie, brass band, minstrel troupe and perambulating emporium combined. Walk up and I'll tell you all about it."

"The funniest show ever on the road, and the biggest traveling warehouse in existence. You get lots of fun for nothing, and the best goods in the market for next to it. Don't make any mistake, but patronize our establishment and you'll never regret it."

"Umbrellas with burglar alarm attachments, rubber bustles warranted not to explode when you sit on them, revolvers that don't go off when they're not loaded, watches guaranteed to go without be- ing carried and a full line of useful and fancy arti- cles will be found in our stock, besides the great free show which must be seen to be appreciated."

"Come and see us, all hands, and remember that our show, the best on the road, costs you nothing, and that at our grand sale you can buy anything you want at low tide prices."

"A certain old party of Lynn, Sat down on the point of a pin,



He caught onto the racket.  
When the pin pierced his jacket,  
And he swore he'd not do so agin."

"That's the kind of pins we sell. I've got a hundred gross of them; but as for needles, I'm only sew-sew on 'em; that's a needless joke, you may say, and I think it's kind o' mazy myself. Thought you mightn't have heard it.

"A gentleman 'way out Afraca,  
A very unprincipled trafficker,  
Used to buy up dead niggers,  
And call 'em wax figgers,  
And so got the ill will of Africa.

"That isn't me, gents, I don't sell my fellow men,  
black, white or yellow, dead or alive. I'm a square ed—"

"Bress my haht, ef dere isn' fader-toned up again."

"Hallo, here's the runaway coon at last."

"Good-mo'nin, boss, how do, Marse Petey, stop yo' laffin'. Solomon, my 'gards, ge'men all. Fine day astah de sto'm?"

"Jeremiah!" gasped Sam.

"Yas'r, dis am me. Los' my way in de snow las' night, an' had tu come to dis yer place."

"Is this the fellow you call my agent?" asked Sam, turning to the landlord.

"Yes, and his bill amounts to twenty-five dollars."

"What! for staying one night?"

"Well, if he d been white I wouldn't ha—charg—"

night the show was, if anything, better than usual for they all wished to appear at their best.

Jeremiah had made friends with two or three nigs in the house, and that evening, after the sale, he and they and two or three more coons adjourned to the kitchen to enjoy themselves.

Jeremiah would have liked to start a prayer meeting, but the coons had other ideas of how to enjoy themselves.

They brewed a big bowl of steaming hot spiced rum punch, and invited Jeremiah to indulge.

"I'se a membah ob de church, I keant," protested that pious nig.

"Dat am all right, we'm all membahs our own-se'fs, an' de dekius an' de passon dey all drinks. Jes'a lilly bit won' hurt yo'. Take it to keep de



"Nothing the mattah with you, eh?" "No, sah, nuffin'." Just then somebody held a looking-glass in front of that complacent coon. "Fo' de lan'sakes! I'se gwine ter die, shuah!" he yelled, jumping back, his wool standing up like the tail feathers of a mad gobbler.

man and that's why I get 'round so lively. If you come to see me once you'll come again, and I'm not ashamed to meet anybody I ever traded with. Yours truly, call again."

Sam and Peter then went into the hotel and introduced themselves, the clerk saying pleasantly:

"Oh, yes, we were expecting you, though not so soon. Your advance agent stopped here last night, and hasn't got up yet, I don't think."

"My what?" said Sam, looking at Peter.

"Your agent, colored man, quite a dandy, all gold lace and velvet, quite a swell, you know. Gave him the best room in the house. Said you could afford it."

"Oh, he did, eh? Well, I haven't any agent."

"Then how did he know you all, and that you were coming here? He must be your agent."

"But I tell you I have none, I never did have, and I'm not going to have. I'm my own agent. I work up a town after I get to it, and don't need anybody to go ahead."

"Didn't you stop at Harkness' Corners last night?"

"Yes, and for two nights before that. Somebody saw us there and has been imposing on you. If he has not left the house yet you had better collar him."

"Why, there he is now," cried the clerk.

"Hallo, there is Jeremiah as sure as I live!" exclaimed Peter.

"I don't think you were very white," said Sam, laughing at the idea of that gorgeous coon living in all this style at his expense. "I'll pay you regular rates and that's all. It's lucky for you I came here. He didn't know I was coming, and if I hadn't he would have skipped out and left you to sing for your sugar."

Sam and the rest laughed at the lugs assumed by Jeremiah, and then Sam said:

"You can give him another room after this, and I'll take his, if you fumigate it, put in two beds and have a fire. We shall be here for three nights. Tra-la-la."

So Sam and his party remained at the Windsor, and the host was glad that they did, for his bar was patronized all day long by the minstrel boys and the friends they made in town.

"You had better look out," said Peter to Sam, "or you won't have any show to-night. Those fellows are making pigs of themselves. The fellow over at the Corners said this was a bad town for drinkers."

"I'll fix 'em," said Sam, and after dinner he called all of the minstrel fellows into a private room and said: "If you boys want to drink, all right, but if any of you is unfit to go on with his part of the performance to-night I'll discharge the whole crowd."

They knew that Sam would do as he said, and they spent the afternoon in sobering up, so that at

col' out. It am a bery blust'rin' night, an' yo' won' hab no fiah in yo' room to-night."

"Kean't do it, sah, I'se a membah ob de church, I tol' yo'."

The others were all enjoying the fragrant punch, however, and after much persuasion Jeremiah remarked:

"Wall, I don' min' takin' jes'a lilly bit ob dat stuff, brudder Abram, jes' to see how it tas'e."

The little bit became a good bit, however, before Jeremiah got through, for the coons kept plying him with the insidious punch, and the more he drank the more he wanted.

He sang, he laughed, he told stories, he even tried to dance, the punch getting the better of him, however, and tripping up his heels.

"Fo'got I had rheumatiz," he remarked, as he got up with some difficulty and sat down on a bench. "Gimme some mo' ob dat dresse stuff an' mebbe de pain go 'way."

He took a good deal more of the stuff, and at last the coons had to stretch him out on the bench to recuperate.

Luckily the punch was exhausted before the rest of the coons got in the same condition as Jeremiah, or there is no telling what might have happened.

"We gotter git dis yer coon to bed," said Brudder Abram, at length. "We kean't leave him down yer in de kitchen."

"P'raps we kin wake him up, Abe?"



Thereupon those coons, tried all the known expedients for waking up a man overcome by too much punch.

They pounded on the soles of his feet, they burned red pepper under his nose, poured cold water down the spine of his back, tickled his ribs and did all sorts of other things.

They were all in vain, for Jeremiah didn't even wink.

"Guess we gotter car'y him up aftah all," remarked Abram, "an' he amn't no small load nudder."

Sam and Peter, smoking and chatting before they went to bed, heard the coons talking and grunting as they carried that unconscious coon up the stairs to his apartment on the top floor.

"Neber did see a niggah get so drunk afo', neber did."

"Sakes alive, de man am jes' pa'lyzed, an' as heaby as lead."

"Reckon he kean't blow de trumpet fo' one while agin."

Then the coons passed on up-stairs, and Sam remarked:

"That's Jeremiah they're carrying up-stairs. Guess he's been celebrating."

"Yes, the mokes had a big bowl of punch carried into the kitchen, and I don't believe they stopped till they finished it."

"I'll finish him," muttered Sam. "Come with me and see the fun."

The partners went down-stairs, the place being still open.

Sam made a few inquiries, and then secured a pail of whitewash, a brush and some marking ink.

They found Jeremiah lying propped up on his bed fast asleep and snoring.

Then they got to work and made a wonderful transformation in that nig's appearance.

With the whitewash and a big brush they painted his face as white as the snow outside.

Then with the marking ink they touched up his big lips, making them look bigger, if anything, and put great black circles around his eyes.

Then they left him to go on with his nap.

Jeremiah slept late the next morning, being awakened at last by a tremendous pounding on his door.

"Wha' dat?"

"Get up; de boss want see yo' in de office right away."

Jeremiah tumbled off the bed, never stopped to look in the glass or anything, but hurried down-stairs to the office.

There he found Sam, Peter, the minstrel boys, the clerk, the boss, and half a dozen boarders.

"For Heaven's sake, what a sick coon!"

"Goodness! he must feel awful to look as pale as that!"

"Going to die, sure?"

"What's the matter, Jeremiah?" said Sam, with great seriousness. "Don't you feel well this morning?"

"Nuffin' de mattah wif me, boss," said the coon, looking around upon that giggling gang in astonishment.

"Why, you're as pale as a ghost. Ain't you sick, really?"

"No, sah. I neber was bettah. What you all laffin' at?"

"Feel all right, eh?"

"Ob co'se."

"Nothing the mattah with you, eh?"

"No, sah, nuffin'."

Just then somebody held a looking-glass in front of that complacent coon.

"Fo' de lan' sakes! I se gwine ter die, shuah!" he yelled, jumping back, his wool standing up like the tail feathers of a mad gobbler.

## CHAPTER XIX.

The sight of his white face, black lips and black-ringed eyes in the glass was too much for Jeremiah.

"Fo' goodness sakes, siffin' am de mattah wif me, sure 'nuff," he gasped as he sprang back.

"Yes, you're awful pale."

"Look ready to die any minute."

"Think you'd feel terrible."

"Gorramighty, mus' hab eat siffin' wha' didn' agree wif me. Wondah if it was dat punch? Specs it was, sure 'nuff. I declar' fo' it, I neber tech anoder drop o' liquor, I neber will."

"Guess you've been out when the sun was shining on the snow and got bleached out."

"Never saw a feller look so pale. It must have struck in pretty deep."

"Oh, he's a dead nigger for sure. It's always fatal."

"Better order an extra size box right away, for that nigger will need it pretty sudden."

All this nearly frightened poor Jeremiah nearly out of his wits.

He thought he was going to die sure pop, without any warning.

"Fo' de Lan'd's sakes, boss, wha' 'm I gwine to do?" he said to Sam.

The latter scented another job and said:

"You look pretty bad, I must say. Better go to bed and I'll send for a doctor. It's either kill or cure, and he's bound to do one or the other."

"Lor' me! am it so desprit as dat?" gasped Jeremiah, the kink all taken out of his wool.

"It is indeed. What have you been doing to get into such a state?"

"Nuffin', boss, 'cept takin' a lilly bit ob hot rum las' night."

"Hot rum!" said Sam, greatly horrified. "The very worst thing in the world you could have taken! By George! you are in a bad way indeed. Better go to bed at once."

"But I ain' had no breakfas', boss," said Jeremiah, dolefully.

"Breakfast! You may be glad that you ain't dead already without thinking about breakfast. Go to bed at once, and I'll send out for a doctor."

That frightened coon went off up-stairs to his room, nearly scaring the chambermaid, whom he met coming out, out of her senses.

"Fo' massy sakes, jes' look at dat coon!" she yelled, dropping everything she had, and running away so quick that she nearly fell down-stairs.

"Deah me! I feel drefle bad," remarked Jeremiah, as he undressed and tumbled into bed.

"Donno as I eber get ober it. Reckon de boss might's well sen' fo' a ch'gyman 'long ob de doctah."

Pretty soon up came a pompous-looking individual with a red head, green spectacles and very wise look, who sat down on the bed and said:

"H'm! very bad case of humbugulosis—very bad indeed. Let me see your tongue."

Out came that coon's tongue like a snake out of its hole.

"H'm! ah, yes! very bad! You won't live half an hour unless—"

"Less what, doctah?" asked Jeremiah, shaking like a leaf.

"Unless you live longer. Shut your eyes. I must make an outward application of my celebrated remedies. That is the only course left."

Jeremiah shut his eyes and felt the doctor painting his face here and there with some cooling fluid.

"That will do," he presently said. "Now take ten of these pills every fifteen minutes and send for me in an hour. If you ain't dead you will probably wish you were. Good-morning."

The pills the doctor left were as big as marbles, but Jeremiah got away with three doses of them in half an hour.

Then up came Sam and Peter and asked him how he felt.

"Bettah, boss. How I look now?"

For answer Sam held a looking-glass in front of him.

"Fo' de lan' sakes! Am dat de 'fect ob de medicine?"

There was a big red spot on each cheek, another on his forehead and one on his chin, making him look like a circus clown.

"De paleness am goin' away, boss. Reckon dat doctah know siffin' aftah all."

"You think so, eh?" said Peter. "Why, don't you know that those red spots are more alarming than the paleness? That's an awful bad sign."

"Am dat so, Marse Petey?"

"Indeed it is, and if you turn blue you're a gone coon."

Just then the doctor entered, looked at Jeremiah, and said solemnly:

"Young man, you're a gone coon. Go wash your face!"

"Don' b'lebs I se able to get up, doctah. I feel pow'ful weak jes' dis minnit."

"Go wash your face this minute, or you're a dead man."

Nearly scared to death, Jeremiah arose, went to the wash-stand, and began scrubbing his face with soap and water.

Red, white and black mingled in the wash-basin, and when Jeremiah looked in the glass he was all right.

Sam, Peter and the doctor had disappeared while Jeremiah was washing.

"Reckon I ain' so bad, aftah all, doctah," said the coon, and then he looked up.

He caught sight of the towel with which he had been wiping his face and then of the suds in the basin.

Then he took one great, big, huge, immense, gigantic tumble.

"H'm! reckon I se been made a big fool ob, all de time! Dem fellahs jes' done paint my face all sawts ob colors, an' I flink I se gwine to die. Wondah wha' dem pills was I se been taken."

He broke one open, smelled and then tasted it.

Nothing but bread rolled up into balls!

You never saw such a mad nig as Jeremiah at that moment.

"Drefle funny, ain't it, to make a fellah flink he'm goin' ter die an' feed him on bread pills! I jes' go down-stairs an' tell dat doctah fellah wha' I flink ob um."

There was a difficulty in the way of the execution of this little plan, however.

When Jeremiah came to look for his outer garments to put on, he could not find them.

More than that, the door was locked on the outside.

Sam had swiped the clothes, and Peter had fastened the door.

"H'm! reckon dey do dat jes' ter keep me yer, sputtered Jeremiah. "A' right, I stays yer den."

With that he got into bed, rolled himself into the blankets, and went off to sleep as happy as a clam. Sam did not happen to want him till after noon, and so let him sleep, but when he did get to work that poor coon had to work with a vengeance.

He had to harness up, sit on the wagon and blow the bugle continuously for three hours, put the horses away, wash the wagon, scrub the hall, clean and fill lamps, play the horn for another hour, scatter hand-bills all over town, stand at the door and shout to attract the crowds, sss the coons who blocked the entrance, play the bugle again, ride the trick mule till his back ached, toot the horn once more and then pack everything away, put out the lights, lock the hall, feed the horses and black Sam's boots, so that at the end he concluded that his nap had cost a good deal more than it was really worth.

"Well, Samuel," said Peter, when the two boys were alone that night, "we caught 'em pretty well, but this town is very rapid, and the people must have variety."

"Yes, they want something new every day, or we won't draw."

"Well, you ought to be able to find it for 'em."

"I think I've got it, Petey, my boy."

"Then give it to me."

"We'll try a cake walk, advertise it big and got a crowd."

"A genuine cake walk?"

"Oh, yes, but we'll manage that Jeremiah gets the cake."

"Why, it's the lady that takes that, and the man gets a cane."

"We'll change it for this occasion only, and I'll tell you why."

Then Sam whispered something in Peter's ear, and Peter made a remark in Sam's auricular organ, and then they both laughed.

"That'll be bang up."

"Won't it, though?"

The next day Sam marshalled his forces, drove all around town with a grand flourish of trumpets, and then, stopping in front of the Windsor Hotel, where a big crowd had collected, that enterprising youth thus addressed the mob:

"Fellow aristocrats! This is me, the celebrated Sam Smart. You've seen me before, but you don't know all I can do. If you think I do the same things night after night, you're as much mistaken as though you'd lost your watch, as I shall show you."

"Come to-night and see our great and only show, new features, new jokes, new everything, an entire change of bill from last night, the only old thing being that we don't charge anything for going in, though you have to pay to get out."

"As an extra inducement to the public we have arranged to have an old-fashioned cake walk and distribution of prizes, to take place immediately after the sale, the three leading couples to receive handsome and expensive presents. Don't miss it."

"Be on hand, all you niggers, and show the white trash what you can do. A splendid cake, a beautiful fan, a cane, a pair of seventeen button gloves, a bouquet and a new bonnet given to the three best couples, so be on hand and let everybody try to take the cake."

Then the full brass band tooted itself hoarse, and the crowd yelled till it got tired.

It was a big thing for Sam, the notice of the cake walk, for the hall was just stuffed to its fullest extent.

Three or four young coons roosted on the stove-pipe, the fire having gone out, the windows were full of 'em, and if there had been any chandeliers they would probably have had their crop of dusky fruit.

There were plenty of coons, but there were plenty of white people, too, for they wanted to see the fun as well as any one else.

When the curtain went up, there were all the boys in black, except Sam, who sat in the middle, and Peter, who occupied the tambourine end of the semi-circle.

Solomon played the bones and Jeremiah knocked the nonsense out of the big drum, just back of Sam.

"Good-evening, Peter. What are you doing these days?"



"Oh, I'm doing a big business."  
 "You don't say?"  
 "Oh, yes, away up."  
 "What is it?"  
 "I'm a doctor."  
 "What? You a doctor? Why, you don't know enough."  
 "I don't, eh. You ought to see the business I do."  
 "Let me ask you a few questions."  
 "Ask ahead."  
 "What would you do to a man who fell out of a window and broke his neck?"  
 "Cure him, of course."  
 "Cure a man with a broken neck?"

Moses and the cat Maria, and put them through their tricks.

Then Sam got up, winked at as many pretty girls as he could see and said:

"The alphabet don't seem to amount to much, being only A B C, but I'll show you what we can do with it."

"There is A for animation, B for botheration, C for consternation and D for degradation, with E for elevation, F and fascination, G for gravitation and H for hallucination, and that's a big one, but we have I with imagination, J and jubilation, K with its kisseration, L with lamentation, M goes in for moderation, N can teach us numeration, while O explains the operation to P of punctuation, while

sung half a dozen more verses of the same sort, and then the sale began, and went along as lively as everything else that Sam took hold of.

"Step up, ladies and gentlemen, and buy our patent reversible ice cream freezer, can be used as a churner, a cradle, an eight day stove or a horse block. Never gets out of repair, and ready at a moment's notice."

"Buy a pair of our fine silk stockings, can be cut up into handkerchiefs, made into neckties, or used for crazy quilts. The handiest thing on the market, and going at nothing at all."

"Catch on to the moth and insect destroyer. There are no flies on that. Sells like hot sausages at Coney Island. Sure death to roaches, moths



Jeremiah looked as proud as a peacock, as he lugged that big cake on one arm and the big wench on the other, his face being wreathed with smiles, while his collar even seemed to brace up and grow three inches higher.

"Certainly."  
 "Why, what would you give him?"  
 "Something to take away his coughin'?"  
 "Well, suppose a man swallowed a bottle of ink by mistake?"  
 "Oh, I'd fix him."  
 "In what way?"  
 "By absorption, of course."  
 "How so?"  
 "Feed him on blotting pads till the ink was all soaked up."  
 "What is rash?"  
 "Standing on your head in front of an approaching locomotive."  
 "How do you get water on the brain?"  
 "Going out in the rain bare-headed."  
 "What's good for a deep cut?"  
 "Razor in the hands of a mad nigger."  
 "Where is the best place to have corns?"  
 "On some other fellow's foot?"  
 "I guess you'll pass, my friend."  
 "Yes, and enchere you, too."  
 "Let her go for the overture."

After the band had played there were more jokes, Peter played the banjo, Solomon did a song and dance with the mule, all hands sang some rattling choruses, and Peter introduced the dog

R in rotation tells S its sensations, and drags T from temptation, cures U of ulceration by means of V's vegetation, while W with vaccination—X—cure me Y'll I Z after the rest."

"You've left out Q," yelled a fellow in the crowd.

"It just got out, go run after it, it's a Qriosity and if you can make any use of it you can have it. Now, just to keep you in humor, I'll warble:

"Do you want to know how to get rich without work? Or why giddy old girls always simper and amirk? Why a dude and a ninny are one and the same? Why a western bonanza king can't write his name? Do you want to know why the sun sets in the west? Or why high-priced goods are always the best? How to hammer old brass into solid gold rings? Would you like to know this and a lot other things? Well, I'll take a day off and find out."

"Don't you oftentimes wonder how rascals and rogues get along, when a good man will go to the dogs? Can you tell why a rich man will marry for money, And street loafers think they are awfully funny? Shall I tell you why actresses powder their faces? Why five-dollar clerks always bet on the races? Why wine is considered more high-toned than gin? Why men out of fat jobs would like to get in? Well, I'll take a day off and find out."

The crowd would not let up on Sam till he had

and other insects which shall be nameless. Ten cents a box and an air gun free. Nobody is too fly to have it, and it'll say shoe-fly to all the pests of summer. Buy, and you'll never regret it.

"Walk right up and invest ten cents in a box of scented toilet soap, used for shaving, perfuming the breath, making the hair curl, improving the complexion, strengthening the muscles and giving you ease and grace of manner, all for ten cents—special inducements to tramps."

Thus our lively young peddler rattled away, and whatever he put up he sold, no matter what.

At last, when it was getting late and the crowd began to grow impatient, he cleared away his table and cried out:

"Now, then, for the great social event—the high-toned colored walk for a cake, in which all the dandy coons are invited to participate."

A space from one end of the hall to the other was then cleared away, the prizes were brought out and displayed on the big table, the musicians struck up, and the walk began.

Sam, Peter and the gift-edged clerk of the Windsor were the judges, sitting on the stage where they could see the couples as they filed past.

"The toniest walker takes the cake," announced Sam, "and the lady gets this elegant leather fan,



the other prizes being given to the two next best couples. Strike up, boys, and let her go!"

The band started a march and the dandy coons took the floor.

"Am yo' gwine ter walk fur de cake, fader?" asked Solomon, as Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham stepped down from the stage.

"Wall, I just guess I is, son, an' ef yo' wantter see de bes' walkin' in de hull crowd, jes' yo' keep yo' eyes on yo' fader. I feel jes' as shuah ob dat cake as ef I had um in my fls' dis bery minnit."

Jeremiah had doffed his livery, and now wore a most resplendent and very gorgeous checked suit, with a big bunch of flowers in his button-hole, an enormous watch chain dangling over his big stomach, and a collar that reached above the tops of his ears.

It was a dandy, that collar, and was starched and polished up to the nines, the points being six or eight inches long and sticking out like sign boards to the right and left.

Sam had furnished the collar, and realizing the importance of judicious advertising, had utilized the vacant space which showed between Jeremiah's coat collar and the top of his head by painting thereon in big black letters:

SMART & CO.  
NOTIONS AND DRY GOODS.

As Jeremiah walked around the hall everybody saw the sign on his collar and smiled, and that dandy coon, thinking the smiles were for him, just braced up and tld his prettiest.

He had picked out a buxom wench in a red tarlatan dress, green ribbons, white feathers in her hair, half pound ear-rings in her big, wing-like ears, and feet like canal boats, and these two led the march.

Then came a dude darky, tall and slim, with barber-pole trousers, blue velvet cutaway, yellow waistcoat, lots of seals and charms, a four-story-and-French-roof collar, lavender necktie, a headlight diamond pin, blue gloves, and half a pound of pomade on his kinky locks.

He had on his arm a sylph-like creature of a black-and-tan complexion, white gauze dress, pink shoes, blue stockings, a necklace of yellow glass beads, and cream-colored mits reaching to the shoulders and looking suspiciously like her old woman's stockings.

Behind them walked a coon in white flannel, with a red cravat, attended by a dusky fairy in a green frock with polka-dots in red as big as your flat.

After these there were all sorts and kinds of darkys, black, brown and cream-colored.

Some wore nobby clothes, some had on street costumes and some wore whatever had been handiest evidently.

One girl wore an ulster, a sun bonnet and rubber boots; another wore a derby hat, plush sacque and cotton dress, and one old daddy had on overalls and cardigan jacket, though he stepped as lively as any one there.

Down one side of the hall, across the end, up the other side and in front of the stage they walked, the judges looking on critically as each couple filed past.

"Reckon de boss tell de oder judge dat dat cake am for me, shuah," muttered Jeremiah to the daisy on his arm.

"Specs dat fan war jes' o'dahed fo' me, too, don' yo' flnk so, Mistah Smiff?"

"I jes' reckon it war."

Up and down and around three or four times, to the music of the band, walked the coons, and then, at a signal from Sam, the music stopped and the coons halted.

"After due consultation with my fellow judges," said Sam, "we have come to the unanimous conclusion that the cake and fan must go to Mr. Jeremiah Smith and Miss Gerty Tarbox; the gold-headed cane and gloves to Mr. Simon Bolivar Goosgrease and Miss Araminta Euphemia Hornblower, and the bouquet of roses and the new bonnet to Mr. Adolphus Maguffin and Mrs. Cleopatra White-Brown."

"Please step up and receive the prizes," cried Peter. "The successful couples will march three times around the hall and display their trophies."

Jeremiah and Miss Gerty grinned, but there were many sour looks on the faces of the other coons as these two walked off with the first prizes.

Jeremiah held that big cake, nearly two feet across, six inches thick, and all icing and ornaments, on one arm, his dusky partner with her prize fan on the other, and again took up the march.

The winners of the cane and gloves, bouquet and bonnet, followed after them, and the greatest excitement prevailed.

Jeremiah looked as proud as a peacock, as he lugged that big cake on one arm and the big wench on the other, his face being wreathed with

smiles, while his collar, even, seemed to brace up and grow three inches higher.

"Tol' yo' I was gwine ter get dat cake," he remarked complacently. "Guess I kin set de style fo' dese country niggahs ebery time."

## CHAPTER XX.

THERE was evidently a good deal of dissatisfaction among the coons who participated in Sam Smart's cake walk, and also among the spectators regarding the distribution of the prizes.

There were plenty who were ready to avow that while Jeremiah's partner no doubt deserved her fan, the big coon himself had by no means honestly carried off the cake.

Of course it had all been arranged beforehand between Sam, Peter and the hotel clerk that Jeremiah was to get the cake.

Sam knew that there would be a big kick, of course, but he had prepared for it, and there's where the second chapter of his little snap came in.

The attraction of the cake walk had done his business a heap of good, the receipts being half as much again as on the previous evening.

The coons did not know about the previous arrangement, and they were not satisfied that Jeremiah should collar the very first prize.

If he had taken one of the others they would not have minded so much.

They were well aware that he was not the best walker, and neither was he, by long odds.

They began to kick very vigorously when the prizes were awarded, and kept it up during the succeeding march around the hall.

"De ideah!" said Hercules Dusenbury, the boss barber of the place, "ob dat big no 'count coon takin' de fus' prize. He shouldn't hab none ob dem."

"Dat am jes' kase him bosses am de jidges," responded Mr. Horatio Muggins, the principal whitewash artist of the Mills. "Wha' mo' cu'd yo' spect?"

"Reckon dey was plenty mo' bettah dan him," growled Anastasius Jawbone, the leading confectioner of the town, "an' de col'd sabcity ob dis yer city owe to demselves to entah a protes' agin dis high-handed usurpation ob deir rights."

"So dey do, son, so dey do," said the aged African in overalls and cardigan jacket, "dey jes' wantter put down de impostah right away. sah, dat's what."

Mr. Anastasius Jawbone had an idea that the aged African was putting on airs if he considered himself a member of society, but the old man's views coincided with his own, and so he let the other matter drop.

Mr. Anastasius was the only coon who wore a dress coat, by the way, and he considered himself most decidedly slighted in not being given at least two of the prizes, to say nothing of the whole batch.

Sam saw the looks of discontent on the dusky faces, and here came his opportunity to work the sequel to his little snap.

When the three prize-winning couples had walked around the hall three times he stopped the music and said:

"Some of you evidently entertain hard feelings and seem disposed to question the decision of the judges. Let me say that everything has been carried on in the most equitable manner possible, but to satisfy all hands, I am now going to divide the cake and give you all a piece. Come up here all hands."

Jeremiah brought the cake on to the stage and Sam put it on the stand and got a big carving knife with which to dissect it.

Jeremiah and Miss Gerty, the other coons and their girls, Mr. Anastasius Jawbone, Hercules Dusenbury, Horatio Muggins, the old man in overalls, the girl in the ulster and about a dozen more nigs, of both sexes, got upon the stage and stood around with expectancy pictured upon their dusky mugs.

Sam stood behind the little table, Peter was alongside, and in front, in a semi-circle, were the cake hungry mokes.

"Now," said Sam, cutting into the cake and dividing it into twenty or more pieces, "this cake is going to bring you all into harmony, one with another, and engender good feelings. I may say it is the cake of peace, so please take a piece of cake."

Then he and Peter and Solomon and Ferguson and all the minstrels distributed the cake, giving each coon from Jeremiah to Anastasius a big slab of it.

"Hold on!" cried Sam, putting up his hand, "we must be harmonious in this business, and all bite together, so as not to let one get the advantage of another by having the first taste. When I say three, bite."

There stood those coons, all in a row, each with a big hunk of cake in hand, ready to gobble it at the word.

"One!" pronounced Sam, and every nig looked expectant.

"Two!" remarked Peter, and the hands approached the mouths, while every eye twinkled.

"Three!" cried Sam, backing away toward the rear door.

Crunch! Twenty pieces of cake popped into twenty mouths, and twenty pairs of jaws came down with a crash.

Everybody got a bite simultaneously with everybody else.

And it was a bite, for a fact.

That cake, though fair to see on the outside, was as full of deception on the inside as the old boy himself.

It was just as chuck full of nepper, cloves, mustard, cayenne, curry, cinnamon, mace, allspice, and every other kind of spice, condiment, seasoning and condensed blazes, as it could hold.

And so the coons all got a bite, and a hot bite it was.

The clashing of the jaws of those mokes was a signal for Sam, Peter, Ferguson, et als, to get up and dust, which they did right speedily.

"Then, oh, what a surprise!" as the poet sings. Every one of those darks thought he had been struck by lightning.

Hot?

That was no name for it.

The center of Africa, the interior of the fiery furnace, the very private and particular reserved hot box in the infernal regions, were all cool and shady retreats compared with the mouths of those deluded nigs at that moment.

"Fo' goodness sakes, I'se done cotched aflash!"

"De lawd hab massy on me, de ole debbil habn't got me at las'!"

"Fo de lub of goodness, gib us a drink ob watah."

"Sakes alibe, dat stuff done make watah bile ef yo' put um on it."

Then such a coughing, and sneezing, and choking, and spitting and dancing around as there was!

Mr. Dusenbury yanked one tail off of Mr. Jawbone's dress-coat in his excitement, while Miss Gerty fainted against Mr. Horatio Muggins, and knocked him clean off the stage.

The people howled, for they had tumbled to the racket, but the coons were as mad as hops.

They laid it all to Jeremiah, and they went for him red hot and sizzling.

They wanted to carve him up in little pieces, they desired to chew his ears off, they expressed an inclination to walk on his neck, they suggested a hankering after his blood, and in many other ways made known their animosity.

They did not carry out all their benevolent intentions, but what they did do was more than enough to satisfy Jeremiah.

They punched him in both eyes, they ripped his coat all the way up the back, they pulled his high collar to ribbons, they kicked him in the shins, they yanked out his wool by handfuls, and finally they made him eat about two pounds of that awful cake, and didn't even give him some hot water to cool his breath with.

After this they let him alone and went out of the hall, being persuaded by the janitor, who mildly suggested turning the hose on them if they did not.

"Suppose we could get up another cake walk, Sam!" asked Peter, as the boy peddlers sat by their cozy fire, after reckoning up their gains.

"This one was a big go."

"Don't believe we'd better try another one in this place. Jeremiah wouldn't have anything to do with it anyhow."

"We might have it all fair and square."

"Yes, but not here. You couldn't make those coons believe it was all right, after having been caught once. Anyhow, I think I'll skip out of this in the morning anyhow. The place is demoralizing the boys."

The next morning, accordingly, Sam moved out of the place, horse, foot and dragoons, and struck another town some seven or eight miles off, where the people were not so wildly hilarious as the denizens of the Mills.

"Glad to get out ob dat place," muttered Jeremiah. "Neber did so much hahd work anywheres. Spec's I fo'git all about dat I'se a membah ob de chu'ch ef I stays dere any longah."

They arrived in the next place about noon when Sam, gathering a crowd around him, thus harangued his hearers:

"Fellow critters, brothers and sisters, give me your zippers. I came here to amuse you and likewise to make what money I can out of you, and I'm going to do both."

"Come and see my great free show and go away happy, and with enough new jokes to tell to your friends all winter, and till the next show comes, when they'll give you the same things over and make you very tired."



"Attend our monster sale and bazaar, where you can buy anything from a pair of skates to a bottle of arnica, shoe-strings, ribbons, laces, corsets, pea jackets, monkey jackets, strait jackets, hair-dye, mus'nche invigorator or toothache drops.

"This is the only place where you can get full value for your money and be sure of a good bargain without having an affidavit, consignee's guarantee or physician's certificate thrown in. Who ever buys of us will come again, and that's the best recommendation anybody can have.

"They say that silence is golden, but you'll find that money talks in this shop, and the more you have the better you are heard. That's why we can buy so cheap and sell all our goods at rates within the means of even millionaires—the poor fellows!

"That's all I've got to say now, brethern, but be sure and come around to-night and I'll astonish you. Blow the bugle, Jeremiah. Go along, nags. Houp-la!"

There was a big crowd on hand in the evening, and Sam sold whatever he put up, for everybody seemed to want to buy something.

There was no Jeremiah on hand, however, and as far as Sam could learn, there was no prayer meeting, white or colored, within ten miles.

It was very strange, but very simple when you come to think of it, and it happened thusly:

Jeremiah was out taking the air that afternoon, and was on the very outskirts of the town when he met a fellow coon with a pail of whitewash, a pole, and a lot of brushes slung over his shoulder.

"Yo' don' say! Play de bugle?"

"M-m."

"Get good sal'ry?"

"Putty fair."

"Solomon long wif yo'?"

"Yas'r, an' yo'd orter see how dat boy has growed! Lordy! yo' wouldn' know him."

"Well, well, ef dis ain' de bes' ting happen to me in to' weeks!" and the whitewasher laughed till the tears came. "Come home wif me, Jero, an' see de folks."

"Why suttinly," and Jeremiah went off with the whitewash artist.

"Take a drink, Jeremiah?" asked the whitewash man, presently producing a bottle.



"Fo' goodness sakes, Ise done cotched aflash!" "De lawd hab massy on me." "Fo' de lub of goodness, gib us a drink ob watah." "Sakes alibe, dat stuff done make watah bile ef yo' put um on it." Then such a coughing, and sneezing, and choking, and spitting and dancing around as there was!

Extra inducements given to parties with big bank accounts to part with their dust.

"Step right up to the Grand Central Opera House this evening, see our gilt-edged, solid silver, all wool and a yard wide show, all for nothing, and then attend the subsequent sale and go home full of joy, of course. What did you think I meant?"

"A red-headed girl named Zabriskie,  
Met a dude very breezy and frisky,  
He mentioned white horse,  
She gave him club sauce,  
Now she keeps his remains in rye whisky."

"I suppose that's what you thought I meant? Well, I didn't, and if you don't believe it I can give you a temperance sermon in fifteen chapters, ten cents a copy."

"Rum and gum makes a bum,  
Drinking gin causes sin,  
Guzzle beer—poor-house near,  
Sipping wine—ten dollars fine,  
Swilling brandy—grave-yard handy,  
Ale and stout give the gout,  
Sip all liquor pretty quick, or  
You will cease to be a kicker,  
And they'll do you up in wicker."

Both Jeremiah and the whitewasher paused and looked eagerly at each other.

"Pears to me yo' face am kin' o' familiar, my fren."

"Clar to goodness, I'se seed yo' face somewhar, stranger."

"Hab yo' lib bery long in dis town?"

"No, sah, I jes' come."

"Eber live in Yo'k?"

"Now yo's talkin'!"

"Thompson street?"

"M-m."

"Membah Lige Johnson?"

"Well, well, brass my heart! Dan yo' know Jeremiah Smith, ob so'se?"

"Lor' brass yo', honey, how do? Wha' yo' doin' way out yer in de woods?"

"Well, well, yo'm de last pussion I eber 'spected to meet."

"What yo' doin' yer, Lige?"

"Oh, jes' libin', dat's all. I'se de boss whitewash artis' ob de town, but it fatches in mo' rep'tation dan money, son."

"Well, well, I neber!"

"What yo' doin', Jeremiah?"

"Trahlin' wif a show."

"No, sah, I'se a membah ob de Methodis' chu'ch an' I don' drink."

"Won' hurt yo', son. Dat am be bes' licker made, won' hurt no one," and Lige took a pull at the bottle.

"Kean't help it. I'se a membah ob de chu'ch."

"So'm I, leadah ob de choir, too; dat don' make no difference," and Lige took another drop. "Do hab a little."

"No, sah, dough I ain' so prejudiced when de liquor am good."

"Dis am de bes' dat's made"—another drop—"bettah hab some."

"I kean't; it's agin my principals. Smells mighty good, dough."

"Yi' jes' bet it do, son"—another pull—"real stuff, dis am."

"Well, it am kin' o' col', an' I'se been walkin' putty fas' an' I'se kin' o' hot, an' mebbi a lilly bit wouldn' hurt me none."

"Co'se not."

So Jeremiah took a little bit and then Lige kept him company, asked Jeremiah to have one with him, and then took one with Jeremiah.

Then Jeremiah had one on his own account, to keep out the cold, and Lige took one to cool off,



and so the bottle circulated as fast as the friends walked.

"Dat am putty good stuff," muttered Jeremiah, presently; "de on'y trubble is, dere ain' nuff of it."

The bottle was empty, and the two coons were only half full, a most distressing state of affairs.

Lige knew a place where the flask could be replenished, and before long both of them were drinking one another's health.

Then Lige began to stagger, or it was slippery, or he had the rheumatism, or something else was the matter, and he had to take Jeremiah's arm.

All this time the pail of whitewash hung on Lige's shoulder, but now it began to wobble.

Nobody knew just how it happened, of course, but pretty soon streaks of white began to appear on Jeremiah's shoulders, running down on his manly bosom.

"Snowin', I guess, Lige. De weathaw am bery changeabul dese days."

"Bery, an' it's so slippy, too. Gorry! yo' mos' fell down dat time, son. Lucky I had hol' ob yo'."

"Pears to me it was yo' what mos' fell down, Lige."

"No, sah, yo's mistookin'."

"Bery likely. Snowin' agin, ain' it?"

The whole front of Jeremiah's coat was white, and streams now ran down his back.

The farther they went the whiter he got and the less there was in the pail.

Jeremiah wasn't sure if he were one person or two, if he were himself or some one else or both, and would have answered to almost any of his numerous names with equal celerity.

Maybe he was the one who did all the slipping or maybe it was Lige: he wasn't sure, but he knew that somebody fell and that he had to pick them up.

As far as appearances went, you could not tell Jeremiah from Lige by the time they arrived at the latter's house.

Both were white from head to foot, both were rather incoherent of speech, and both were very affectionate and loath to part with the other.

There was no whitewash in the pail at all, by the way, and one of the brushes was thrust down between Lige's collar and the back of his neck.

How it got there nobody knew.

Two snowy figures walked into Mrs. Johnson's tidy kitchen where she was frying bacon, and one of them said:

"Ebenin', Hannah, brought a fren' home, J'miah Smiff from Yo'k. Yo' know J'miah, don' yo'? Wha' yo' got fo' suppah?"

"Ebenin', Mis' Johnson, glad to see yo', met Lige on de road, fished him home, got cotched in de wuss snow storm as eber was, an'— Lor' what dat?"

That was Mrs. Johnson's broom, and it took him right across the cheek.

He fell over a bench near the stove and lay on the floor near it totally disinclined to get up.

Lige went off to a bedroom and sat down to think things over.

He may have intended to sit on the lounge, but he took the floor instead, and did not think it worth while to change.

It took him so long to think things over that he fell asleep, and as Mrs. Johnson was an agreeable body who did not like to disturb folks, there he remained.

"De fess ob J'miah John Smiff, a membah ob de chu'ch, comin' off yer an' inducin' my hustan' to drink! It am jes' shameful. Let him lie dere, de ole pig! Jes' hope de flah'll singe ebery bit ob him wool off! Serbe um right, too!"

"Got cotched in a snow sto'm, did dey? H'm! Dere's all dat whitewash what I spected to hab Lige fix up de chicken-house wif, so's to make tins look spectable, an' dis lazy niggah got him all ober his coat. Some folks am too shifless fo' nuffin'."

"I know it war Jeremiah what got Lige to drink in. Cose it was, dere's de bottle in him coat peekin' at now. Wondah ef dere's any lef' in it? I se gwine ter make pies to-morrer, an' dis am bery good fo' dem."

"Not a drap! De stingy fellah! Reckon I like a taste ob liquor m'as' occasionally. Tink dey might hab lef' me a lilly bit, at leas', de loafahs! Lie dere, yo' nassy beas'. Jes' like to dump de flah out on yo', so I would."

Mrs. Johnson had her supper alone, for Lige was still asleep, and of course she would not disturb him.

She would have disturbed her other guest, however, if he had not been so heavy, and so he lay there, sleeping away like a log.

Finally it got to be quite late, and Mrs. Johnson concluded that she had better go to bed, for there seemed to be no way of getting rid of Jeremiah.

That big coon at last awoke, or at least aroused himself, for he seemed to be still asleep, marched out of the house without saying a word, and took the nearest road to the hotel.

Contrary to his usual custom he did not sing as he walked along his weary road, but was as silent as any ghost.

Straight to the hotel he went, and straight in, the office door being open, although it was past midnight.

The half asleep clerk caught one glance of Jeremiah, and then fell off his chair and under the counter in a jiffy.

Jeremiah had come straight enough, so far, but now he made a slight mistake.

Sam and Peter were sound asleep in their little beds when they suddenly awoke with a start.

There was a stranger in the room.

The light of the moon came in at the window, and there, standing in its full radiance, was a figure all in white, and as silent as a ghost.

"Get your pop, Sam! It's a burglar!"

"I'll burgle him."

"Oh, no, it's a ghost."

"Either will do."

Sam was about to fire when the white figure moved.

Instead of sending a bullet, Sam grabbed a pillow and took the ghost on the head.

"Fo' de lan' sake! Wheah is I? Dis amn't my room, sho' yo' bo'n."

"Jeremiah John!" cried Sam, "go on out of here or I'll make mincemeat of you."

Jeremiah John got.

## CHAPTER XXI.

SAM did not find out the real cause of Jeremiah's whiteness when he came into his employer's room for some time.

He supposed that the coon was in his night clothes and indulging in sleep walking, part of which was true enough.

He had been sleep-walking, to be sure, but the white was the whitewash which had been liberally deposited upon his clothes by his friend and companion Lige Johnson.

Sam's explanations awoke Jeremiah, who bolted forthwith and made his way to his own room.

He was wide awake enough now, and an examination of his garments revealed the cause of Sam's alarm.

"Fo' de lan' sakes, de boss mus' ha' fought dat I was a ghos', sure 'nuff. Specs I mus' ha' been putty flahed to git all dat whitewash on me. I gorter clean it off or de boss s'pect siffin'."

He was an hour or more getting the stuff off, and in the morning he put on another suit and went at it again.

Solomon came in while he was at work, watched him for some time, and then said:

"Whar yo' git all de plastah on yo' close, fader? Did yo' fall into a mo'tah troff?"

"Neber yo' min' how I git um on, sah. Dat am whitewash, sah, an' it am good to take de spots out ob close."

"Reckon it knock spots out ob de cloff ef yo' leave it on. Wha' yo' s'pose Marse Sam say?"

"Neber yo' min' what he say. Ef I catch yo' tellin' tales I gib yo' wha' yo' kean't buy for a cent. Yo' 'membah de las' time yo' tol' 'tories on me, don' yo'?"

Oh, yes! Solomon had a vivid remembrance of that little occurrence.

It made him smart to think of it even now.

"Yo' do 'membah it, h'm? Wall, dat's wha' yo' git ebery time yo' tol' de boss on me, an' mebbe sometimes dere'll be nails in de shingle, too. How yo' like dat, sah, 'm?"

Solomon had nothing to say, and the subject being wearisome he went away.

That day he overheard a conversation between Lige Johnson and his father, the two cronies happening to meet in the hotel yard.

"Lan' sakes, Jeremiah, reckon yo' took home a hull bucket of whitewash on yo' close las' night. Yo' mus' hab been awfully undah de 'floodence."

"Wasn't undah de 'floodence 'tall, Lige. It was yo' self, an' yo' spill de wash all obah me. Took me all de mo'nin' to git um off."

"Wall, I reckon bese ob us was putty full, yah-yah, how de ole woman teach roun' dis mo'nin'. Clar she'd nevah spoke to yo' agin. Said 'twas all yo' fault. Gorry! we mus' hab got away wif a lot!"

"Yo' did, p'raps, Lige, but I didn't take none. I had to see yo' home, an' yo' slopped de whitewash all ober me. I se a membah ob de chu'chan I don't take nuffin' strongah dan milk."

"Yas, but yo' put a drop ob whisky in um to take de taste ob de pail out'n yo' mouf, don' yo' yah-ha, yo' can' fool me, Jeremiah, 'deed yo' kean't."

This little conversation gave Solomon an idea which he hung on to till a few days later, when Sam said to him:

"You want to look out how you behave, Solomon, or your father will come into your room some night all dressed in white, the same as he did to me, and scare the life out of you."

"H'm, dat wasn't sheets him hab on dat time, boss, it war whitewash. Him an' Lige Johnson get on a tare an' fall ober deirse's, an' fader got de stuff all ober him close, an' lie undah de stobe half de night, an' den get up an' walk in him sleep, sear' de life out'n de eluk in de ofiss, an' den git in yo' room by mistook. Dat's how it was."

"Oho, that's it, eh?" thought Sam, and afterward he and Peter had a good laugh over the story.

Well, things went on swimmingly for a week or more, and then Sam struck another big town where he had to hustle to catch the trade of the citizens, who were up to the period, and would not swallow everything, by any means.

Sam was a hustler from Wideawake, however, and it was as natural to him to make things fly as it is for a small boy to get out of doing work.

That evening when the crowd had gathered, attracted by the announcement that everything was free, Sam came forward in front of the curtain and said:

"Here we are again, fellow dyspeptics, and here we intend to stay. You will now see the best show ever given in this town, and all for nothing, and after that I intend to sell you something. The show isn't a sell, though, as you will see. The best talent, the newest jokes, the funniest acts and all for nothing. Let her go, boys!"

Then the curtain went up and Sam took his place in the middle, with Peter on one end and Jeremiah on the other, for the arrangement was frequently changed so as to give constant variety.

After a round of jokes, funny conversation, songs, choruses and glees, Peter put his trick mule through his exercises, Solomon exhibited the cat and dog, and then Sam sang a song with about twenty extra verses thrown in, for the accommodation of his enthusiastic audience.

Then there was more show, and after that the sale began and continued with an occasional interruption till ten o'clock.

Sam's business was only moderately good that night, but during the following day he hustled things, scattered handbills all over the place, gave a concert in front of the hall, and advertised to give a handsome present to the young lady who would bring the most young fellows with her that evening.

"This is leap year," said he, "and we must all be on the jump. Here's your chance, girls. The more young fellows you bring the more chance you have to get a prize. A dozen gloves given to the first, and a box of candy to the next."

There was a boy's boarding-school in the place, and one enterprising old maid invited the whole gang of fifty-three to accompany her, filling them in like a company of soldiers the minute the hall was opened, and inviting the door-keeper to count them.

One society belle rallied her admirers and brought fifty of them to the hall, thinking that she was certain of getting the prize, not having reckoned on the old maid and her boys.

Some brought a dozen or twenty, and some only three or four, while one young man, reversing the order of things, scooped in a whole female seminary and marched forty giddy girls into the hall, much to the astonishment of the man at the door.

Sam gave a rattling entertainment that evening, and announced that the prizes would be given after the sale.

The young lady with her fifty beaux, seeing that she was likely to lose the prize, flew around and scooped in a dozen or more young fellows who had come alone.

Then the boarding-school boys hooked on to the seminary girls, and the old maid saw that she was left unless she could outflank her giddy rival.

"Now, then, ladies and gentlemen," said Sam, "we will award the prizes. I find that Miss Featherhead has sixty-two escorts, and she therefore gets the gloves."

There was a shout of applause, when up jumped the old maid and said:

"I claim the prize myself. I brought fifty-three young gentlemen in, and the door-keeper will tell you so."

"Well, my dear young lady," said Sam, "Miss Featherhead has sixty-two, and that beats your lot by a dozen."

"You said the one who brought the largest number was to have the prize. You didn't say anything about picking them up after you got here. Miss Featherhead only brought fifty."

Miss Featherhead looked daggers at Miss Fussbudget, but the latter said:

"Ask the door-keeper how many young gentlemen I brought in, and see if I am not entitled to the prize."

The door-keeper confirmed Miss Fussbudget, and also added that Miss Featherhead had only brought fifty.

The young lady had made up her mind to get that box of gloves, and so she whispered something to one of her dudes, who got up and said:



"Aw, me deah sah, I wish to call attention to one thing, don't ye know."

"You call me, do you?" said Sam. "Then you'll have to show your hand."

"The proposition mentioned, young fellahs, not boys, don't ye know. Miss Fussbudget has brought meah children, and they don't count."

The boys, some of whom, were eighteen years old, did not relish this, and one of them said:

"Wait till we catch that dude outside. He'll see what the children will do with him."

"We'll bury him in the snow."

"We'll put him to bed."

"We'll smash his dicer in."

"The young gentlemen are not children," sputtered Miss Fussbudget. "They are young men, and that is just what the notice said, and I claim the prize. I brought them here—I did not go around coaxing them to sit with me after I had come."

Sam thought a moment and then said:

"Miss Fussbudget gets the gloves and Miss Featherhead the box of candy. The point was well taken. Anybody could rake in a whole army of fellows after getting here."

Miss Fussbudget's boys set up a loud crowing, but Miss Featherhead's dudes were mad, and the spokesman got up and said:

"It isn't faiah, don't ye know. Chwilden weren't to be counted."

"How did you happen to get on the young lady's list, then?" asked Sam.

"Yaw a loafaw, sah, and if you'll come outside I'll punch yaw head."

"If you think you can do it, you may step right up here on the stage," said Sam. "We've never given sparring exhibitions, but I'm always ready o oblige."

"You'll be dwummed out of town," cried the dude, angrily.

"Ah! That's good. I generally go out to the music of a brass band. But I never had any drums. That'll be something extra."

"Yaw show is no good."

"Then it's a match for you."

"Yaw too fresh, and I'd like to lick you," sputtered the dude.

"Rats!" cried the boys. "Hurrah for the Academy boys and for Miss Fussbudget."

"Miss Fussbudget takes the box of gloves," said Sam, "and Miss Leatherhead the candy."

"Featherhead, not Leatherhead," said the indignant young lady.

"Oh, I beg your pardon; I was thinking of the young man," said Sam, and ever after that poor dude was known as Leatherhead by all the boys in town.

Fussbudget got the gloves; the dude declined Sam's invitation to have a little boxing match on the stage, and Miss Featherhead went home mad enough to chew her own bangs off at the thought of having been outgeneraled by that old maid.

When the crowd got outside the Academy boys snow-balled the dudes, and made them very tired, while Sam was declared to be a regular brick.

The next night all the boys, and a lot more, came to the show and bought extensively, so that Sam did a better business than he had done both previous nights put together.

Then he concluded to shake the place and go somewhere else, and in order to get ahead of the dudes, hired the Academy boys to blow on fish-horns, and so drown the noise of the drum corps which Miss Featherhead had organized.

"That was fun," said Sam, as he got beyond the town. "I never had things stirred up so before. Leatherhead and his dudes will never forgive me, but those Academy boys will always be my friends, and wherever I meet one I will be sure of a welcome."

Three or four small towns were then visited, and then Sam struck another big one, where he made up his mind to remain the whole week.

The first night the hall was full to the very doors, and Sam started off with his very newest gag so as to catch the crowd.

After the overture he and Peter rattled away at each other for five or ten minutes, keeping the audience in a continual roar.

Then Solomon did a banjo solo, and the minstrel boys sang a lot of choruses, while the two partners were behind the scenes getting ready for something entirely new, which Ferguson announced at a signal from Sam.

Then Sam and Peter came out and did a song and dance, Sam taking the first innings as follows:

"Down in the shady lane  
Where the modest violet grows,  
Lives my little sweetheart,  
Her name is Susie Rose.  
I meet her every evening  
Where the daisies softly flows;  
She's my only mash,  
If I had some cash  
I'd wed my Susie Rose."

"Sweet, laughing eyes, cheeks rosy red,  
Dimpled chin, wavy hair all round her head.  
Ain't she a daisy? I'm nearly crazy  
With my darling Susie Rose."

Then, after dancing around the stage for a few minutes, Sam skipped out, and Peter came on and sang his little verse.

"Down in the shady lane  
Lives pretty Susie Rose.  
If I meet that other nigger  
I'll smash him on the nose.  
If we should meet to-night  
We'll surely come to blows.  
If he comes to mash,  
I'll settle his hash  
And run off with Susie Rose."

"Lovely black eyes and nose so red,  
That's what I'll give him, and smash his head.  
Oh, I'm a daisy, I'll drive him crazy.  
If I catch him fooling around Susie Rose."

Then Peter did his turn at dancing, and then Sam came in and they both danced and went through a burlesque slugging match together, after which they both sang the praises of the lovely Susie Rose, and finally danced off the stage to great applause.

They were called out once or twice, and might have continued singing all night, but Sam put somebody else on, and at last got down to business.

Shoe laces, stove blacking, collar buttons and neckties went like hot cakes, toilet soap found a ready sale, tooth paste went booming, and, in fact, whatever Sam offered sold as fast as put up.

A song or dance now and then, while he was looking over his stock, kept the crowd in good humor and made them want to buy all the more eagerly when the young peddler got at them again.

Solomon, Jeremiah and the rest kept things whooping, and Sam cleaned out all his small stock and a good deal of his big before shutting up shop for the night.

The next day, having not much to do, Sam thought he would play a little joke on the big coon.

There was a wag of a doctor who had his office not far from the hotel, and he, Sam and Peter fixed up the gag in good working order.

Sam had become acquainted with the doc, knew he was a joker, and so took him into his confidence.

"What's the matter with you this morning, Jeremiah?" he said, in the course of the forenoon.

"Nuffin', sah, as I knows on."

"Nothing the matter, when you look so pale and wild, and do such queer things?"

"Wha' I done queer, boss?" asked Jeremiah, opening his eyes.

"No, sah, habn't done nuffin' out'n de reg'lar o'dah, has I?"

"Well, I should giggle. You'd better go see the doctor."

"Does I look sick, boss?"

"Yes, sir, very bad, and that's the worst with this sort of trouble, the patient thinks he's all right till he suddenly collapses."

"What am dat, boss?" asked the coon, getting alarmed.

"Goes all to pieces, breaks down, busts up completely, that's what it is. You want to look out that you don't."

"Den I done queer tings, too, boss?"

"Oh, awfully queer. If I hadn't known you were sick I never would have stood them from anybody."

"What was dat, boss?"

"Oh, never mind now. You wouldn't remember them, and that shows that you're pretty bad."

Poor Jeremiah began to tremble like a leaf, and to imagine all sorts of things.

"Sakes alive, boss, I do begin to feel kinder bad, deed I does. Wha' I bettah do, sah?"

"Go to a doctor."

"Whar was dey a good un, boss?"

"On the next block, Dr. Black."

"Am he a cold man, boss?"

"No, you'll find him pretty white, I reckon."

"You fink he tol' me wha' de mattah wif me?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Hey, wha' dat, boss?"

"That means certainly."

"Oh, dat's it, hey? Yo' tink de doctah fix me up all right?"

"I hope so," said Sam, gravely.

"Laws o' massy! Den yo' ain' shuah ob it?"

"No, and you had better lose no time."

Then Jeremiah John was frightened, for a certainty.

"Whar yo' say de doctah lib, boss?" he asked.

"On the next block, in the middle of it, on this side of the way, up one flight, Dr. Black on the door."

"A'right, boss. I go right away dis minute. Ef ting I hab to odah a c'arge, will yo' pay fo' it?"

"Pay for a hearse? Oh, yes," said Sam, cheerfully.

Jeremiah did not stop to explain that that was not what he meant, for Sam's little remark broke him all up.

He just got out of that in a hurry, found his hat and coat and hurried away as fast as he could put.

He found the doctor's office all right as Sam had directed, went up-stairs, and knocked at the door.

There was no answer and he knocked again in a few minutes.

Still there was no reply, and he gave the door a kick.

It flew open, but no one was visible.

There was nothing to be seen but a small, square room, neatly and simply furnished.

Two or three doors could be seen, a lounge, a couple of chairs and some pictures.

"Guess I sit down an' wait fo' de doctah," he muttered.

He approached one of the chairs to sit down when it immediately moved away from him of its own accord.

"Fo' de lan' sakes, wha' dat mean?" chattered the poor coon, his wool beginning to straighten out.

He went toward the other chair and that got out of his way in the same fashion.

Then he noticed a queer sort of arrangement in the middle of the room.

It was a sort of screen, being tall and round, and having curtains hanging from the top to the floor.

It looked like one of these portable shower baths that dudes have in their rooms, being closed in with red curtains on all sides.

On the side nearest Jeremiah there was a card bearing these words:

"RING THE BELL INSIDE."

Jeremiah went up, examined the card, and was very much impressed by all this mystery.

"Ring de bell inside, hey?" he muttered.

"Inside what? Inside de co'tains? Wondah ef dat's de way to call de doctah?"

He stood peering at the thing, and speculating as to its meaning for some minutes.

"Ring de bell inside of dat ting? Wall, dat's de funnies yet. Why don' he hab de bell on de outside? How am a fellah gwine to know 'nuff to come in fust off? Reckon dat am de queerest ting I eber seed."

"Ring de bell inside, hey? Inside de co'tains, I reckon. Wha' fo' he put de bell dere, anyhow? War he 'fraid somebody steal um? Wall, I reckon ef dey see all I seed dey be too frightened to steal anyting."

"Ring de bell, hey? Wall, I don' see no oder way ob callin' 'im, an' I specs I gotter obey de rules ef I bust."

Then Jeremiah pulled aside the curtain.

## CHAPTER XXII.

JEREMIAH pulled aside the red curtains which draped the mysterious frame-work standing in the doctor's office.

The curtains opened almost without Jeremiah's touching them, as if by magic.

Then that poor coon saw what caused his blood to go away down forty below zero, and freeze into a solid lump.

There, standing before him, was a white and ghastly skeleton, grinning at him like a Cheshire cat.

That wasn't the worst of it, though.

The minute the curtains were drawn the grizzly thing began to dance.

A skeleton was bad enough, to start with.

A dancing skeleton was a peg higher than Jeremiah's nerves could endure.

His hair stood out as though charged with electricity, his own limbs shook as bad as those of the skeleton, and he let out a yell loud enough to smash all the glass in the place.

He had never been so terribly scared in all his life.

The skeleton danced more wildly, and at last put up its hand as if to take its head off to throw at the coon.

That was too much for Jeremiah.

He let out one whoop and fell over backwards on the floor all in a heap.

He didn't know anything for about five minutes, and then when he came around he found himself sitting on a lounge with Sam, Peter and the doctor standing before him.

Nothing could be seen of the skeleton, or the mysterious frame with its red curtains.

Sam and the doctor had wheeled that into the next room and stuck it in a closet.

They had likewise taken away the wires with which they had made the chairs to move and the skeleton to dance.

"Dat yo', boss?" said Jeremiah. "Whar am da:"

"Ef ting?"

"What thing?"



"De ting wif de co'tains roun' up, de mau all bones what dance an' sear' de life out'n me."  
 "A man all bones, Jeremiah, what do you mean?"  
 "I see a man lookin' like he wants upholst'in', you undahstan? Jes' de framewo'k wif nuffin' on him. Wha' yo' call dat?"  
 "Do you mean a skeleton?"  
 "Yes'r, dat's um, a skilligan. I see a skilligan right yer in dis room, an' he done dance a break-down an' made out he was gwine ter chuck him head at me when I done flop right down on de flo' an' neber know nuffin'."  
 Sam looked at Peter, the doctor looked at Sam, and all three shook their heads.  
 "Pretty bad case, eh, doc?"  
 "Very."  
 "Softening of the brain, eh?" said Peter.  
 "Looks like it."  
 "Too bad," muttered Sam.  
 "Wha' yo' say, boss?" asked Jeremiah, opening his eyes.  
 "He imagines all sorts of things, I suppose," said the doctor to Sam.  
 "Seems to."  
 "Neber 'maged nuffin', boss," protested Jeremiah. "I see dat skilligan plain as I see youse, a-dancin' an' a-caperin' roun' jes' like he hab a fit."  
 "But there isn't any skeleton here, Jeremiah. Wouldn't he be here now if he had been?"  
 "Donno, boss," muttered the coon. "Specs likely he would."  
 "That's only another of your strange freaks, Jeremiah John," said Sam, gravely.  
 "Yes, you've been doing some funny things lately," added Peter, as solemn as a judge.  
 "Wha' I do, Marse Petey?"  
 "Why, this morning you told me I was no good and that you could sell more stuff in a month than Sam could in six."  
 "Neber did, Marse Pete, neber did, declar' fo' it I neber did."  
 "And yesterday," said Sam, "you thrashed Solomon awfully, because he had been to church."  
 "Oh, boss! Tick dat boy fo' gwine to chu'ch! Sakes nibel! I lick him kase he don' go 'nuff."  
 "Of course you don't remember it, and that makes it worse," said Peter.  
 "Very deplorable case," chimed in the doctor—"very."  
 "And only last night, you know, you told me not to give you any of my sauce, don't you remember?" said Sam.  
 "Yes, and shook your fist in his face, too."  
 "And told me to go and walk on myself."  
 "Very bad case," groaned the doctor.  
 "Fo' goodness sakes, I neber done nuffin' ob all dat," cried the poor nig getting scared.  
 "Why, don't you remember saying you had shaken prayer meetings and wouldn't go to another as long as you live?"  
 "And how you asked the deacon to get up a card and dance party in the church parlors?"  
 "And how you licked Solomon for saying his prayers?"  
 "And threatened to put a head on me and Peter and the whole gang?"  
 "Fo' de lan' sakes!" muttered Jeremiah, leaning back on the lounge, the cold sweat pouring off him, "did I do all dat an' neber 'member a wo'd ob it?"  
 "You don't think we'd lie, do you?" said Sam and Peter in a breath.  
 "No, boss, but it am bery funny I don't remembah nuffin' 'bout it."  
 "Softening of the brain," said the doctor. "Loss of memory and all that. Very bad case sir, very bad indeed."  
 "Goodness me!" moaned Jeremiah.  
 "You've been working too hard," said Sam.  
 "Altogether," added Peter.  
 "You must take a rest."  
 "Go to Europe."  
 "Forget business."  
 "And take care of yourself."  
 "Fo' goodness sake, am it so bad as dat, boss?"  
 "I would like to take hold of this case," said the doctor, rubbing his hands. "I'll guarantee to kin or cure him in a few days."  
 "Lor' sake, I don' want'er be killed, doctah," howled Jeremiah. "Kean't yo' cuah me?"  
 "Well, I'll try."  
 "You'd better let him, Jeremiah," said Sam.  
 "Your case needs attending to at once."  
 Poor Jeremiah was so scared that he never tumbled to it that they were guying him.  
 He thought he was ready to fall into the grave at an instant's notice.  
 "First I must give you a shock," said the doctor. "Come inside, please."  
 He took that poor nig into his office, and gave him a dandy electric shock to begin with.  
 Jeremiah had had a similar experience before, and he jumped and pranced about like a mule at the first touch.  
 Then the doctor brought out a four quart bottle filled with some reddish liquid.

"You must take some of this right away," he said. "Drink all you can."  
 Jeremiah took the bottle and drank till he thought he would burst.  
 He started to put it down, when the doctor said: "Oh, dear, dear, that isn't enough. You haven't drank half what you ought. Take some more."  
 "Fo' massy sakes, doctah, I done bus'ef I drink any mo'. I'se full up to de muzzle now."  
 The doctor made him take another quart of the stuff, which was nothing but colored water; and the poor coon thought he would explode.  
 "Now you must take some of these pills," and the doctor brought out a lot of pellets as big as peas.  
 He made the poor coon swallow a dozen of them at once before he could taste them.  
 They made things lively going down his throat, however, for they were red hot with cayenne pepper.  
 Jeremiah gulped, twisted himself into a bow knot and ran to a window and stuck his head out.  
 When he put it in he was wiping his mouth on his sleeve, and he didn't look half so big as before.  
 "Golly! I reckon yo' kill me sure 'nuff, ef yo' gibs me any mo' stuff like dat," he muttered.  
 "Now you must take the rest of it," said the doctor, taking up the bottle.  
 That deluded coon began to smell a mouse by this time.  
 He grabbed the bottle from the doctor and chucked it out of the window into the back yard.  
 "Reckon I hab taken all de watah I'se gwine ter," he sputtered. "Yo' jes' done make a fool ob me, but I 'low I'se got my eyes open an' ef yo' gibs me anyting else I broke yo' jaw."  
 Then he dusted out of that pill shop and downstairs, muttering to himself:  
 "Don' b'leve dey was anyting de mattah wif me 'tall! De boss jes' done fool me, dat's all. Kean't tell me dey wasn't a skilligan dere all de time. I seed him behin' de closet do' when I put my head out de windah."  
 Sam, Peter, and the doctor laughed to split the minute Jeremiah got away, and he could not help hearing them.  
 That convinced him that he had been the victim of a practical joke and made him as mad as a hornet.  
 He went back to the hotel and walloped Solomon, so as to get even with somebody.  
 Poor Sol got a daisy basting, and had no more idea what it was for than the man in the moon.  
 "Reckon fader got crazy," he muttered, as he went off rubbing his legs and looking for a soft place to sit down in. "Don' know what I got licked fo' no more'n nuffin'. Wish I could see dat col'd boy I was playin' wif yes'day. I take it out ob him fo' sass'faction."  
 Jeremiah felt better after licking Solomon, but the little coon had no chance to work off his anger, and he felt sore and sad, particularly when he sat down, for two days.  
 In the meantime Sam had given the town the royal bounce, and had gone on to another, where he raked in the ducats in the liveliest way.  
 Then Ferguson, the leader of the minstrels, came to him and took hold of one of his buttons, and said:  
 "Look here, Sam, you ought to pay us fellows more money. We're the biggest part of your show."  
 "Oh, you are, eh? Well, I like your cheek. How did I find you fellows?"  
 "Temporarily embarrassed, that's all, my dear boy."  
 "H'm! I like that. You were dead busted, that's what you were, and I took you up, gave you a lot of new business, paid your bills, and gave you a good engagement."  
 "Well, we want more money, or I do, anyhow. I am the leader, and ought to get more."  
 "How much do you want?"  
 "Forty dollars a week, and all expenses."  
 "Don't you want to run the whole business, and pay me a salary to sell goods?" said Sam, in that serious way of his, though he was perishing to have a good solid laugh.  
 "Well, we want more money, or we'll leave," said Ferguson.  
 "All right," said Sam. "If that's the feeling of all hands, you can go, but I want to find out if it is first."  
 It seemed to be, for the whole crowd had big heads and thought that Sam could never get along without them.  
 Sam paid their expenses over night, and the next morning they went to a town where he was due the next day, and gave a show that night to fairly good business.  
 When Sam arrived the business fell off, and scarcely a dozen people attended the minstrel show while his sale was crowded.  
 He learned that Ferguson and the boys had been

singing his must popular songs and doing all his funny business, the same being copyrighted.  
 Ferguson moved on to another town in Sam's route, and Peter went over that night, sat in the rear of the hall and saw all Sam's funny snaps repeated.  
 The next morning he called upon Ferguson in company with a sheriff's officer and said:  
 "Look here, Ferguson, you're singing Sam's songs and doing his acts, and you must stop it at once."  
 "I guess we've as much right to do them as he has," blustered Ferguson.  
 "Well, I guess you haven't. Those songs are private property and here are the copyrights. This is a sheriff's officer. This time I merely warn you. Repeat the offense and I'll clap you into jail as quick as lightning."  
 Ferguson saw that Peter meant business and cawled.  
 He thought he could get along without Sam's songs, however, and he went opposition to Sam himself in the very next town.  
 Sam did a rushing business and made lots of money, but Ferguson's minstrels were frozen out.  
 After that they let Sam's route alone and performed their own old acts, sang their ancient songs and did the same chestnutty business they were doing when Sam first found them.  
 At the end of a fortnight Ferguson ran away with what little money there was and the show was busted.  
 Sam found them stranded, and they wanted him to take them along with him.  
 "No, sir," said Sam, "you tried to run me out and you got left. That's all I want to have to do with you."  
 He finally relented so far as to get up a big benefit for them, and made enough money to send them to their homes.  
 By this it will be seen that Sam's life was not altogether a bed of roses, but he was plucky, and by dint of hard work, perseverance and natural shrewdness, managed to get along tolerably well.  
 One day, along in the spring, when wheels were preferable to runners, he struck an old-fashioned town in the mountains that seemed to have been asleep for the past fifty years.  
 Sam determined to wake it up, however, so he drove around, scattered dodgers everywhere, blew the trumpet, and made a tremendous racket.  
 Driving up in front of the only hotel in the place he stood up in his seat, cleared his voice, and shouted:  
 "Fellow snoozers! I've come here to wake you all up and open your eyes wider than they've been in a century."  
 "Behold me, the great, original and only Sam Smart, the sauciest and smartest peddler in all the world, with my first-class variety combination and the dandiest lot of goods you ever saw."  
 "Here, to-night, in the town hall, I propose to set you all to laughing and won't charge you a cent, and after that I will show you my goods, which you can buy or not, just as you like, it makes no odds."  
 "We have toilet soap that will make your hair curl, silver castors to open your eyes, razors to sharpen your wits on, sausage grinders that will astonish you, and everything else in proportion."  
 "Step right up to the Town Hall and see us, h'all of you, and bring your grandmothers, sisters, cousins and aunts. You never heard that joke, I reckon. Anyhow, come along and give us a good send-off."  
 "Clocks that will run a year, stove lifters that never get hot, tooth paste good enough to eat, shoe-blackening that you can use for the complexion, and baking powder that will raise the roof, all for sale."  
 "Come one, come all, to the old Town Hall, and start the ball, so I can make a haul, so skip the canawl for that is all, yours truly. Jeremiah, the sun-burned Caucasian, will now toot the bugle."  
 That sort of talk kind of waked up the old daddies of the town, and in the evening Sam had a pretty good crowd.  
 "Brothers and sisters," he began, "we will open the ball with a ballad sung before all the old fossils of Europe. Tune up, brethren."  
 Jeremiah, Peter and Solomon then started the air, and Sam let himself loose, thusly:  
 "Why is it when walking along on the street,  
 If a red-headed maiden you chance for to meet,  
 You very soon after as a matter of course,  
 Come straightway upon a very white horse?  
 I don't know, I'm sure."  
 "Why is it that dudes wear such very high collars,  
 Or that absence of brains goes with plenty of dollars?  
 Can you tell me why fall always follows the summer,  
 Or who has the most cheek, a tramp or a drummer?  
 I don't know, I'm sure."







"We have also the bloodthirsty, man-eating wolf, captured by the intrepid hunter, Mr. Bantam, at great personal risk and in peril of his life, and will exhibit them free and for nothing."

"Come and see the comical monkeys, the missing links of the human species, also the funny goats, the performing mule, the educated cat and the intelligent dog, all combining the grandest show for the price on the globe."

"We know that you were just carried away by the rest of our great show last night, and therefore we will repeat the whole business and give away full directions with every joke so that you can't help understanding them. Then, of course, our immense sale will be sure to attract you, and I'll bet that if we went into a ten acre lot we would be sure to fill it."

Sam's sarcasm went right over the heads of those old Rip Van Winkles and was lost, but they could understand the animals and at night the hall was packed.

Sam very wisely started off with his sale, reversing the general order of things for this occasion.

He knew he wouldn't get a cent out of those strangers if he gave them the show first, and so he resorted to a little bit of stratagem.

"Now, then, ladies and gents, I'm going to put up a few little articles for sale, just to stimulate things a trifle."

"Every lady who buys a cake of our non-combustible, floating toilet soap for ten cents gets a reserved seat to the exhibition of trained wild animals shortly to follow."

"To every male member of this collection of museum freaks who purchases a package of tooth powder for a quarter we will give a ticket for a front seat."

"If you don't want to clean your teeth, and I don't suppose you do, you don't look like it, you can feed it to the animals, who consider it nicer than candy or sponge cake, and by so doing obtain a front seat to witness these wonderful animals."

"Here you go now, for our splendid pocket-knives. Every boy who buys one gets a seat, ten cents is all we ask. The show is free, but the seats cost money, or, rather, if you buy our goods we give you a seat check for nothing."

"Pocket handkerchiefs, three for ten cents and a seat in the rear given away for nothing. While you are making up your minds which kind of seats you want I will warble."

"Oh, come to our great wild beast show. See the jumbies of old Mexico, The apes who cut capers, The starbangs in curl papers, And the elephant from Ohio, Here's the kangaroo from Japan, And the tumbumb black and tan, The cats with blue faces, And all the sweet graces Of the Howldos of Yucatan. We've the crocodile from the Nile, And the simian with his style, The bulldog so fancy, The grinning chimpanzee, And others that take in the pile. So come to our great monkey show, See the zuzzugs from Borneo, Watch the gentle bullfrogs, And the gnashing wogwogs, he... For you'll see 'em before you go."

Then Sam rattled off his small wares, preferring to sell them than nothing, and sticking those back-woodsmen well into the bargain.

He had had a lot of checks made out, and these he gave away as fast as he sold anything, but not with them.

Everybody in the crowd wanted to see the animals and to get the best seats, and in that way Sam managed to do a good business.

When he had sold all the grown folks tickets, he saw that there were a lot of boys and girls to be provided for, and he determined to rope them in too.

"Now, I am going to clear the hall of those who have no tickets," he shouted, "but first I am going to sell these ear muffs and lace ties to the boys and girls at five cents each."

"Mr. Pocket will pass around and take up the tickets, and those who have none must go out. You can get a ticket by buying one of these useful little articles worth five times the price I ask."

"The show is free, and the tickets cost you nothing, but you must have a ticket before you can see the show. We don't allow any one to stand, the animals don't like it. Now, then, clear the course."

There was some grumbling, but every one of the boys and girls had to put up their little five cents or get bounced.

Some were skipped, of course, but our enterprising young friend had made a good thing out of it, and so didn't care.

The animal show wasn't good for much, but it got rid of those woodsmen, and Sam laughed in his beard.

He could not sell anything after that, and so he shut up early, and went to the hotel with Peter to reckon up the profits.

Bantam was satisfied with five dollars, and all the more so when Sam said:

"Now, Mr. Bantam, the field is yours. Work it all you can. I'm going to get out in the morning."

Sam did get out, and early, too, for he was not quite sure how the people might feel toward him.

He heard afterward that some of the old settlers had expressed a desire to mob him, and also that Bantam did a good business in the place, and took out considerably more than Smart & Co. had.

Sam had had enough of the backwoods, and he now struck four or five lively towns one after the other and did a rushing trade.

Finally he lighted upon a good-sized town, almost a city in fact, the day before St. Patrick's day.

He found the place overrun with Micks, for there was going to be a big parade the next day and loads of Irishmen had come in from all the towns round about to take part in the celebration.

When Sam heard of this he made a raid upon every dry goods and fancy store in town, buying up every yard of green ribbon he could lay his hands on.

The announcement of a free show brought every Pat and Dan and Mike and Della and Honora to the hall making it look like an uprising of the Fenian brotherhood.

Jeremiah's green and gold uniform had caught the terriers, and Sam and Peter both wore big neckties and rosettes of the same emerald hue.

Then Sam started in with an eye for business.

"Here you are, ladies and gentlemen, the handiest little tool you ever saw, the patent reversible fire-at-both-ends, Hibernian can-opener, sold for ten cents and a yard of green ribbon thrown in. Every lady ought to have one."

The way those can openers went was a caution to hardware merchants.

Solomon was kept busy passing in the dimes and passing out the tools, while Peter made a pair of scissors look sick cutting off the ribbon.

"Now, then, here you are with our elegant nickel-plated Irish match safe, to be carried in the vest pocket, and sold for ten cents; a rosette of green ribbon chucked in. I call it an Irish match safe because it's worth its weight in gold and can't be beat. Here they go now!"

And they did go, for a fact, every Irishman in the crowd buying one as long as they lasted.

When these gave out, toilet soap tied with green ribbon, shoe paste, tooth powder, corn salve, stove blacking, fire lighters, and cards of collar buttons were put up.

The green ribbon was the bait that made the things sell, and Sam didn't have a single small article to dispose of long before ten o'clock.

The big things were then baited with green sashes, green parasols, green table covers and green anything, and the greenhorns gobbled them up as fast as they were thrown on the market.

"You all want to go to the parade to-morrow," said Sam, "and you all want to look your best. Here's you fine, extra quality satin or silk ribbon for a cent a yard and good measurement. Peter, play us the latest French march."

Peter, Solomon and Jeremiah played "St. Patrick's Day," and the green ribbons went a flying.

By closing up time Sam had sold or given away every inch of ribbon, and would have been glad to have had more to dispose of.

He had also cleaned out a lot of small wares that had been cluttering up his wagon, and so made room for other and newer goods.

"To-morrow night we'll catch 'em again," said Sam to Peter, "and if the weather is good we'll take the wagon out into the square and do a big biz."

"Right you are, Samuel. The parade will be over and the town will be full of people."

"And some of the people will be full as well," remarked Sam.

Very early on "St. Patrick's day in the morning," that enterprising coon, Jeremiah John Joseph Abraham Isaac, determined to go into a little speculation on his own account.

The parade was to pass through the public square, and there would be a great many people anxious to see it.

Jeremiah John had not lived in a big city for nothing.

He knew the ropes pretty well by this time. That's where his speculation came in.

If he could provide good seats for people to see the parade, he might make a good deal of money.

He could not hire windows or anything of that sort, but there was still a way.

He determined to put Sam's big wagon to a good use.

Sam and Peter were busy making plans for the evening campaign, and Jeremiah, therefore, had the field to himself.

First he thought of taking Solomon into partner-

ship with him, but as that juvenile moke would expect some remuneration for the work he performed, his father thought best to do without him.

Shortly before the time of the forming of the procession, Jeremiah got out the horses, harnessed them to the wagon without assistance, and drove out.

It was not an easy job getting those restive steeds into harness.

One of the leaders evinced a determination to chew one of Jeremiah's ears, and the other seemed desirous of stepping on the coon's big feet.

"Hi dar, yo' Injun! Wha' yo' 'bout? Can' yo' keep 'till a minnet? Get off my foot, yo' clumsy big beas'! Ef I take de whip to yo', guess yo' stop o' dat! G'long wif yo', animie! Don' yo' get 'nuff to eat? Stop chewin' my ear off!"

However, the harnessing was at last completed, and Jeremiah John mounted the box, gathered the ribbons in his big paw and drove in triumph out of the yard.

Neither Sam, nor Peter, nor Solomon had seen him and he was all hunky.

It didn't matter if the hotel people did see him, for they would think it was all right anyhow.

He drove to the principal square and found a throng of people already gathered to witness the parade when it should come along.

Picking out a good place on the edge of the sidewalk, he stood up, looked around and shouted:

"Heah yo' are, folkses, de very bes' place to see de parade, nuffin' to intahfeah wif de wiew an' only a quahdah fo' good seats, long as de 'cession lasts."

At first there seemed to be no disposition on the part of the public to accept Jeremiah's generous offer.

The procession had not arrived yet, by the way.

"Now's yo' chance, g'men an' ladies, de very bes' place in de hull city to see de 'cession. On'y a quahdah fo' a 'served seat to see de hull bizness!"

Presently the blare of trumpets, the roll of drums, the fluttering of plumes, the waving of banners and the glittering of steel announced that the parade was coming.

"Heah yo' are, de last chance to see de 'cession. On'y a quahdah to see de hull ting. Step right up yer, ladies, an' awoild de crush. Get up heah, g'men, an' keep yo' new hats f'om bein' squashed."

It made a difference, the coming of the procession, and Jeremiah's offer was now favorably considered.

Half a dozen Hibernian ladies and gentlemen occupied the best seats at a quarter a head, and two Irish gentlemen being on Solomon's seat, three in Jeremiah's usual place, and three or four more behind him.

Then for ten cents each other places were provided, some beside the driver, two or three on the wheels, while one agile youth bestrided the top and held on by the wings of the big spread eagle.

Jeremiah increased his revenue by three or four dollars, and felt proportionately happy.

Then along came the procession, and there was great excitement.

The horses, the brass band, the green regalia, the fluttering banners, and the regular marching of the boys from the "owld sod," just set people wild.

"Hooroo! That bates the farth of July all to smithereens!"

"Hooroo for Qireland an' St. Pathrick!"

Right in the midst of it, when Jeremiah had his head turned looking at the procession, and never thinking of the horses, along came Sam and Peter.

"If that coon hasn't got the biggest gall I ever saw!"

"Speculating a little on his own account, is he?"

"What nerve!"

"You want to give him a lesson."

"That's just what I'm going to do, my boy."

#### CHAPTER XXIV:

THERE sat Jeremiah John on the front seat of Sam's big wagon, holding the reins loosely and looking at the St. Patrick's Day parade.

There also sat a dozen or more Irishmen and women, all looking at the parade.

This was Jeremiah's little speculation on his own account, and Sam knew nothing about it.

That coon had sold reserved seats from which to view the parade, and had put the proceeds thereof in his own pocket.

While the procession was passing, however, along came Sam Smart and Peter Pocket.

Sam caught on the nig's little scheme at once.

"I'll teach that coon a lesson," he remarked to Peter.

"It's about time he had one, I think," returned Peter.

Sam carried a light cane in his hand and now, without being seen by Jeremiah, he walked up to the leaders while Peter stood by the pole horses.

"Now!" said Sam.



Then he hit the horse nearest him a sharp crack with his little stick.

Peter gave the pole horses a slap at the same moment.

The whole team gave one sudden dash and jumped ahead about six feet.

Then they were stopped, but the mischief had been done.

The sudden start caused every one of those Micks to fall off the wagon into the street.

Out they went, sans ceremonie as they say in the gable books, one on top of the other.

Everybody but Jeremiah went off that wagon in a jiffy, and a more mixed up lot of Micks you never saw.

The boy, straddling the eagle, went off a-flying and landed on the stomach of a fat alderman who hadn't been on the wagon at all.

Jeremiah grabbed the reins, and thought he had prevented a dangerous runaway.

"Whoa dar, yo' Injun!" he cried to the horses. "Wha' yo' 'bout dar? I come down an' kick de nonsense out'n yo' befo' yo' know it!"

Meanwhile the Irishmen had begun to pick themselves up, and to threaten Jeremiah with vengeance dire.

They shook their fists at him and uttered all sorts of threats.

"Be heavens, av I get up there to yez, ye sun-burned gorilla, I'll break the jaw aff ye?"

"Come down here, ye currully-headed misfit av a baboon til I jump on yer neck!"

"Give me back me quarther, ye naygur thafe, or I'll have the lah on yez, begob!"

"It's a put-up job, begorra, an' we've ped our money fur nuttin'!"

"Wait til I get yez down our sthreet, ye black vilyan, an' I'll pull the jaw aff yez?"

"It's another outrage an' poor ould Oireland, that's phat it is, me byes!"

"Air we always to be throdden undher fut? Nivir."

"Down wid the naygur! Be heavens we'll capture the chariot an' see the hu'l parade."

From threats and snaking of fists the indignant reserved senters went to blows.

They were full of wrath, mixed with old rye, and considered that they had been grossly swindled.

Money had been extorted from them and then they had been dumped into the street.

If it was a free country, what right had anybody else to breathe if they said they mustn't.

Consequently Jeremiah's position became a dangerous one.

The Micks were not satisfied to resume their seats.

No, they must avenge their wrongs on the colored aristocrat who had made them pay to witness their own glorious parade.

With this determination they went for that coon red hot.

They yanked him off his box and proceeded to make life a weary, waste wilderness for him.

They blacked his eyes, they swelled his nose, they cut his cheeks, tore his clothes, threw mud on his stockings, made a cuspidor of his hat, walked on his spinal column and turned him into a busted up community generally.

While they were doing all this Sam jumped on the box, Peter climbed up behind, and away went wagon and horses toward the head of the procession.

Sam drove past everything, and rode in front of the grand marshal himself.

Peter scattered handbills by the hundred till the air was full of them, and one would have thought that monster snowflakes were flying about.

"Anything for business," said Sam, with a laugh, still leading the procession.

The Irishmen could not but laugh at having that gorgeous poldier's wagon in front of them, and presently Sam drove off down a cross street and let the procession have entire possession of the road.

The indignant sons of Ireland who were taking it out of Jeremiah to satisfy their vengeance, pounded him until the procession had passed, and then they left him.

They did not want to miss the review before the mayor, otherwise they would have been hammering that poor make when night fell.

They followed the parade, and then Jeremiah got up, felt himself all over to see if any of him were missing, and then looked around for the wagon and horses.

They were gone, of course.

"Goodness me, de waggin an' hosses am done some! Wha' I gaine ter do now I wonder?"

He had not seen Sam, and thought, of course, that the angry crowd had run away with his team and wagon.

"Dey tol' me dey was gwine ter do it, but I didn' raley tink dey would. What shall I tol' de boss when I see um?"

"Ef I say de hosses done run away wif me, den he wanter know wha' business I had de waggin out fo', an' dere he coteh me.

"Ise gatter make up some good 'scuse, per-wided de waggin don' come back, but mebbe de Irishmans get liabed ob totin' it roun' town an' bring it back afo' de boss miss um. Ef dey do den Ise all right."

Thus musing he made his way sadly back to the hotel, where he found Solomon sitting on the steps.

"Oh, fader, what yo' flnk?" cried that young moke, opening his eyes very wide.

"I done flnk a good many tings, son, but what I flnk mos' jes' now is bodder take de Irish."

"Oh, fader, wha' yo' flnk?" cried Solomon again very excitedly.

"I done tol' yo' what I flnk, son, an' ef yo' ax me agin I take de bigges' shingle I kin fln' to yo'."

"Oh, fader, what yo' tink, somebody done stole de waggin an' de hosses, right out'n de stable."

"Yo' don' say?"

Jeremiah John Joseph had an idea.

"Yas'r, fo' dey ain' dere now an' de boss donno nuffin' 'bout it, an' I reckon dey's done stole."

"Co'se dey is," said Jeremiah, "an' I seed de fellows wha' steal um."

"Sakes alibe, fader, am dat so?"

"Eberyting I says is so, son, an' I don' wan' yo' ter fo'git it, yo' undahstan."

"Yas, fader, I member dat."

"I run aftah de thieves, son, but I couldn' coteh um, an' I got run ober by a lot ob waggins befo' I could stop myse'f."

"Lor' sakes, fader, yo' do look all broke up fo' a fae'. It am a wondah yo' wasn't killed."

"So it am, son, so it am, but that shows wha' comes ob doin' yo' duty by de boss. I didn' ear nuffin' 'bout bein' runned ober, ef I could foteh back de boss an' waggin, but I couldn' do it aftah all."

"Well, fader, I reckon de boss an' Marse Petey gubs yo' suffin' fo' dat when dey fln' it out."

"Mebby dey will, son, mebbey dey will, but folks don' allus get deir rewards in dis worl', no mat-tah wha' dey do."

Jeremiah then impressed strongly upon Solomon's mind, partly by the repeated mention of a full-grown shingle, that he had been hurt while trying to prevent the theft of Smart & Co.'s team.

"Yo' membah dat ef de boss ax yo' anyting?" he said.

"Yas, fader, I membah dat."

"Bery well, see dat yo' do. Ef yo' flnk yo'm likely to fo'git it I took de shingle to yo' now, so's to gib yo' mem'ry a hist."

"Oh, I membah it fo' shuah!"

Then Jeremiah went off, pinned up the rents in his garments, brushed, washed and scrubbed himself, and got rid of the marks of the affray as far as he was able.

He had just made his reappearance when along came Sam and Peter.

The horses had been put up, but this Jeremiah did not know, not having been to the barn since his interview with Solomon.

"Jeremiah," said Sam.

"Yas'r," promptly answered the coon.

"How comes it that the horses were taken out of the stable this morning without permission?"

"I war jes' gwine ter speak ob dat myse'f, boss. Did yo' know dat dey had been stolen?"

"Ah, indeed?"

"Yas'r; dey was stole by dem paradin' Irishmens, an' I had de gretes' time yo' eber seed tryin' ter get dem back again."

"You did?"

"Yas'r. I runned aftah dem an' did my bery bes' to reeber de team, an' I reckon I would ha' done it on'y a hull gang ob dem fellows sot onto me."

"Well, you do look pretty well broke up."

"Deed I is, boss. Day was mo'n fibe hund'd ob dem Irishmens, an' dey walk all ober me, an' aftah all I lose de hosses an' de waggin."

"Ah!"

"Reckon yo' bettah offah a raw'd fo' dem, boss. Dem Irishmens hab got de mos' cheek ob anybody I eber seed. De idee ob comin' an' takin' de team right out ob de stable."

"And harness up, too?"

"Yas'r, an' harness up, too. Wondah dey didn' ax me ter do dat fo' dem."

"Pretty cheeky, wasn't it?"

"Yas'r. Neber see sech cheek."

"I think I have, Jeremiah."

"Dat so, boss?"

"Yes. I think your cheek takes the cake and the ovens and the counter, and the whole bake shop."

"I ain' got much cheek, boss," said Jeremiah, with an air of extreme innocence.

"Oh, yes, you have, to stand there and tell me such lies."

"Oh, boss, neber tol' a lie in my life! Ise a membah ob de chu'ch! Why, boss, ef I coteh dat boy ob mine tellin' lies, I jus' skia him alive."

"Jeremiah, you're the biggest liar I ever saw. You can give Eli Perkins points on lying. You took the team and let out seats to those Micks to look at the parade. If I catch you doing it again, I'll skin you and make a white man of you. Now get out or I'll kick you down-stairs."

Poor Jeremiah went away, feeling very sad.

He could not think of any way by which Sam could have learned the truth, unless Solomon had blabbed.

He determined to interview that son of his forth-with.

First he procured a trunk strap and then he went out to the stable.

There he found not only Solomon, but the wagon and team as well.

Grabbing the young coon by the collar, Jeremiah threw him across his knee and proceeded to limber up that strap by whacking Solomon's rear there-with.

"Fo'git what I tol' yo', will yo'?"

Whack!

"Tol' de boss I took de horses, hey?"

Whack!

"An' aftah I press it on yo' min' dat dey was stole?"

Whack!

"Yo'm de mos' fo'gitful boy I eber see, dat's what yo' is."

Whack!

"Ef I koan't press t'ings on yo' min' I press dem on yo' skin, yo' heedless critter!"

Whack!

The whacks and the remarks came so fast that Solomon had no breath for remonstrance.

Jeremiah whacked away till the sweat ran, and then he said:

"Dere now! Hope dat'll be a lesson fo' yo' as long as yo' lib."

Solomon limped away to a safe distance, rubbing his smarting flanks, when he remarked:

"Like ter know wha' fo' yo' lick me like dis, when I ain' done nuffin'?"

"Yas, yo' hab, yo' done tol' de boss I took de hosses."

"Didn'?"

"Den yo' tell any mo' lies, or I lick yo' agin, yo' undahstan?"

"Neber tol' him nuffin'. Jes' eber yare de minnit, an' fln' de hosses put up."

"Look out, son, how yo' tol' me any mo' lies."

"Ain' tol' nuffin'," blubbered Solomon. "Yas, a nasty ob nigguh, yo' is, an' I jes' wish dem Irish fellows had broke yo' jaw, dat's what I da. Ies jes' gwine ter run away de fus' chance I get."

"I'm, reckon I lick dat boy fo' nuffin' dis time," mused Jeremiah, when Solomon had dusted.

"Well, dat's a right. I gus squar' on him fo' de maulin' dem Sam' Patrick fellows gub me. Gotter git eben wif somebody, an' dat boy am a good's anybody else."

That night Sam did an even larger business than on the previous one, and the next, being Saturday, he did better still.

On Monday he left town, and set up in another place eight or ten miles away, where he remained for three or four days, finishing up the week with small towns where he stayed a single night, that being as long as he could afford to stay.

"Now, then, fellow citizens," Sam would cheer, "this is the one great opportunity of your lives. I shall remain here but one night, and if you don't catch onto your chance this time you'll never get such a good one again."

"Don't regret all your lives that you didn't buy of me when you could, but step right up this evening and encourage trade, do a virtuous action and send me away happy. Everything going at panic prices."

"You'll find clothes-wringers that'll wring out your clothes and almost put 'em on the line. Sewing machines that a child can handle, and cut-throats that can't be beat and all sold for a song."

"Washing becomes a pleasure when you use our soap, shaving is a positive luxury when you raise our razors to your mugs, shaving mugs of course, and shaving the mugs of some fellows is hard work, but our articles are all good and sold at ante bellum prices. Don't let these hard words frighten you, they are not loaded."

"Before the sale, come and see the comedical variety entertainment, which is free, but worth more than you pay for most shows that come this way, and don't you forget to remember it. Now, if you'll listen a few moments I will tell you what I've heard."

"I've heard that there's going to be a big fight between Johnny Bull and China."

"That the Micks are going to let people ride free. From Maine down to South Carolina."

"That the women are all going to vote in the fall."

"That there won't be any more taxes."

"That the politicians are going to the wall."

"And there'll be no more grinding of axes."

"If you want to know when it's all coming about, and when the good time to begin is."

"I only can tell you, I don't want to sell you, I heard it all from Maguinnea."



"I've heard that Jim Blaine is out of the race  
That he doesn't want to be president;  
That old Kaiser William has thrown up his crown  
And will be of this country a resident;  
I've heard that the bootblacks are going to France  
In order to get some more polish;  
That cigars and tobacco are going to be free  
And the tax upon gin be abolished.  
There are many things more that are coming to pass  
If I told you I never would finish.  
So do not dispute it or try to refute it  
For I heard it all from Maguinness."

When the weather was beginning to get pretty well settled again, Sam used to carry on his sales in the open air and not in halls, as he had done during the cold weather, and found it more to his taste as well as more conducive to big receipts.

One day toward the end of March Sam and his party lighted upon a city of considerable size where our young friends had to hustle to make things go.

Sam was used to that, however, and rather enjoyed it then otherwise.

Jeremiah John began to feel at home again, and put on more lugs than a backwoods congressman.

He hadn't been in town two hours before he struck up an acquaintance with a lot of dandy coons, and was being shown all the honors.

"Hab yo' got anything to do dis ebenin'?" said one dandy coon by the name of Rufus Morningstar.

"I spees I'se at liberty, sah, ef dey's anyting gwine on, Mistah Rufus. Am dey any balls or labries gwine on in town?"

"No, sah, but de cold ladies an' ge'men giba skatin' entertainment in rink."

"Whar yo' git yo' lee, chile. De ponds done melted long ago."

"Dis am a rollah skatin' rink, sah. Didn't yo' see de beach of dat kin'?"

"Did I eber heah ob dat kin'? Why, chile, whar yo' spouse I was brung up? Why, bress yo' haht, I used to take de gas roun' in de bigges' rink in New Yawk, an' show 'em how to skate."

"Dis am a high-toned affair, an' on'y de bery cream ob cold society goes. I'll interdooce yo' to some ob de toniest gals in de hull city."

"Dat's right, chile, dat's right. I'se allus bery glad to show 'spect to de ladies."

When evening came Jeremiah shook the show, put on his loudest clothes, met Mr. Morningstar by appointment, and went off to the rink.

The pastime of roller skating was at its height in this town, though it had died out in many places, and the darkies went into it with more vim than any one else.

There wasn't a white person to be seen in the rink, though there were all shades and styles of wigs, from black to *café au lait*.

Now Jeremiah, for all his boasting, had never had on a pair of roller skates in all his life, but of course he wasn't going to say so.

He had once skated on the ice and supposed that it was all the same on rollers.

He paid a boy five cents to put on his skates and then started off.

He had just got into the ring and was going around with the gang when away went his heels and he sat down with force enough to split the planks.

"Wha' fo' yo' run agin me?" he asked a tall, thin, dyspeptic looking coon who had fallen over him, being unable to stop.

"Wha' fo' yo' fall down right in de middle ob de flo'? Ef yo' donno how ter skate, why don't yo' go off by yo'self an' learn."

"Reckon yo' kean't teach me nuffin'," sputtered Jeremiah, struggling to his feet, "an' I don't wan' none ob yo' sass."

"Why don't yo' git out ob de way den?"

Jeremiah looked at the lathy coon and snorted. If it came to a fight, he reckoned he could paralyze that coon without half trying.

"Wha' yo' do if I do git in de way, h'm?" he asked, with a touch of scorn.

"I wipe up de flo' wif yo', dat's wha' I do!"

"Jes' try it once!" and Jeremiah glided out in front of the lanky nig.

He didn't do very much gliding—at least, not on skates.

The first thing he knew he took a header, and was polishing the planks with his flat nose.

"Dat make de secon' time yo' knock me down," he muttered as he got up.

"Den dis is tree times," said the sick-looking darky.

Jeremiah had fondly fancied that he could kill that coon at one swipe.

When the coon fetched him one in the neck and landed him on his back he changed his opinion.

He went sliding over that floor at the rate of a mile a minute.

He fetched up against a heavy weight on rollers, and, of course, brought it down.

The heavy weight was of the female persuasion,

and when she fell down she got as mad as they make them.

"Wha' fo' yo' do dat, yo' clumsy nigger?" she cried. "Spees yo' done it a puppus. Wait till my husban' come 'long. He pay yo' fo' dat."

The husband came along at that very moment, and there is no knowing what might have happened to poor Jeremiah, had not Mr. Rufus Morningstar also happened along at the same time.

"Fought yo' knowed how ter skate?" he said to Jeremiah.

"So I do, so I do, chile, but I'se suffin' f'om malaria dis ebenin' and it turns my head. I'se a victim to dat trouble an' I done fo'got all about it."

Then Jeremiah took off his skates and concluded that there were some society crazes that were not what they were cracked up to be.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Jeremiah did not stay very long in the skating-rink after his last adventure, but, having already removed his skates, managed to sneak off without saying good-by to his new friends, or asking them to call and see him.

He left the rink and went off to where Sam was addressing the crowd in the glare of his gasoline lamps, and rattling off one thing after another as fast as he could put 'em up.

"Ah, there, here comes the king of Africa!" shouted Sam, as he saw Jeremiah approaching. "He has been specially engaged to play the bugle, and here he comes. Step right up here, Your Majesty, and show the crowd what a fine blower you are."

Of course Jeremiah could not refuse this gentle invitation from the boss, and he stepped up as requested.

He had had enough of skating rinks, but he thought that he might loaf around and see the crowd without having to do anything.

Sam had other views, and he proceeded to make them known.

Jeremiah took his trumpet, Peter got his cornet, Solomon banged the big drum, and Sam began to sing loud enough to be heard in the next town.

After he had warbled about seventeen verses, and he saw signs of weariness on the faces of the crowd, Sam remarked:

"I will now recite you a touching little poem. Get your handkerchiefs ready, and if you haven't any, I'll sell you a choice lot, three for a quarter, all of the finest linen, your initial worked in the corner, and a bottle of cologne given with every gross."

"Only a flower," the maiden said,  
As she gently bowed her golden head,  
Only a rose, but, oh, what bliss,  
He gave it to me with a loving kiss.  
Only a nickel," the lover remarked,  
As he thought of her he long had sparked,  
Only five-pence, it isn't much loss,  
And pretty soon I'll be the boss."

"Only a parson, and only a ring,  
Only a church, and how the bells ring,  
Only a wedding and only a trip,  
Only a pocket-book awfully sick,  
Only a little wife, loving and meek,  
Only a clerk on ten dollars a week,  
Only to live on an upper flat,  
Last year's overcoat, last year's hat."

"Only a clerk," the young wife said,  
Scrubbing the floor and making the bed;  
"Twas said in a tone of doleful pitch,  
She always thought the man was rich.  
Only a clerk, the wretch superficial,  
His diamonds were only artificial,  
Only a broom across his back,  
And make him sit on a full-grown tack."

"Only a shop girl, nothing more,"  
Muttered he as he walked the floor;  
"I thought to swipe a bully bundle,  
How could I have been such a noodle?  
But never mind, I'll have some joy  
When I'm the dad of a bouncing boy,  
Only a year with a rush and a whirl,  
And then disappointment, 'Only a girl!'"

"That fellow was sold, ladies and gents, but if you buy of me you won't be sold; the goods will be, however, and at the lowest price. Step up and buy 'em."

Patent revolving coffee-grinders going for nothing, used equally well as a coffee-grinder, knife-sharpener, nutmeg-grater, baby's rattle, or eight-day clock, grind coffee in any language, and used in all climates. Can tell coffee from beans, and never get out of repair. If you neglect to buy one, you lose the opportunity of a lifetime.

"Don't forget to invest in our new and improved bustle, mouse-trap and flour sieve combined, nothing like it ever seen, best and most convenient article ever introduced into the household, sells like hot cakes, and the cry is, still they come, buy one, and you'll never regret it, if you live to be a thou-

sand years old. A child can work it, and it only costs half a dollar, cheap as dirt."

Sam had his crowd down pretty fine, and if he did not sell them one thing then it was another, and before the evening was over he felt assured that he would not have to go to the poor-house that night at least.

"What do you say to sticking her out here for another night, Petey?" he said to his partner after business hours.

"I think we ought to work it, Samuel."

"Guess we will, but you must keep your eye on Jeremiah. He has broken out in a fresh spot."

"What is it?"

"Why, from being a member of the church and all that he has become a society masher, a lah-de-dah coon, a man about town and a heavy swell. There's a darky ball here to-morrow night and we want to keep him away from it."

"I'll do it if I have to kill him."

"That settles it. He doesn't go to the ball."

Next day Jeremiah came to Sam in the afternoon and said:

"Boss, I want ax yo' a question."

"Got a new conundrum, eh?"

"No, sah, not prezackly that. I ain't been no-whar fo' a good while, boss."

"Well?"

"An' I fort mebbe yo' hadn't no 'jections to my gwine off to pra'r meetin' dis ebenin'."

"Oh, you want to go to prayer meeting?"

"Yas'r."

"Sure it isn't a skating rink?"

"No, sah. Neber go to sich drefful places."

Solomon had boned on the old man, and that's how Sam knew.

"Oh, you don't?"

"No, sah."

"Ain't taking in a cake walk?"

"No, sah."

"Nor a raffle for a crazy quilt?"

"No, sah. I'se gwine ter pra'r meetin', I tol' yer."

"Just a plain, every-day prayer meeting?"

"Dat's all, sah."

"No frills on it?"

"No, sah, jes' plain."

"Well, you can't go."

Poor Jeremiah had made up his mind that he wasn't going to have any trouble in getting away. He found that he had made a mistake.

"Oh, I say, boss, yo' neber 'fused me befo' when I axed yo'. Wha' de mattah now?"

"You're not going, that's all," returned Sam, "and that settles it."

"All de same I'se gwine to dat ball ter-night," mused Jeremiah, to himself. "Ef I kean't get up one 'seuse, I'll get up anoder, an' go anyhow."

Peter kept a sharp watch on that coon until supper-time, when he said to Sam:

"I don't think Mr. Jeremiah will get away from us this time, my boy."

"You can't tell, Petey. You've got to watch him every minute. I shan't feel sure of him till I see him on the wagon, driving around to the square."

"Well, I won't let him get away from me, you can bet."

When it was almost time to hitch up, Peter went around to the stable and found Solomon all alone.

"Where's your father, Solomon?"

"That little coon began to dig his fists into his eyes and blubber."

"Fader am bery sick, Marse Petey. He kean't go out to-night, an' I reckon ef he eber goes out it'll be a massy."

"Your father's sick?"

"Yas'r, bery sick, wow-wow, too to his bed befo' suppah, didn't eat nuffin', pale as a ghos', bco-hoo-hoo!"

"Why, what's the matter with him, Solomon?"

"Donno, spees it am consumption. Eberybody say he am a gone coon. Donno wha' I'm gwine ter do now, ef my fader goes. De doctah say he kean't lib till mo'nin'."

The idea of that big coon going off like that struck Peter as very comical and he grinned.

In fact he smelt a very big mouse.

"Sorry to hear he's so bad, Solomon, I am indeed. Guess I'd better go and see him. I may be able to do something for him."

"No, Marse Petey, you couldn't. Nobody kin do nuffin' fo' him now. It am too late."

"Well, there's no harm in seeing him before he dies, at any rate."

"Yas dey is, Marse Petey, yas dey is," cried Solomon in great alarm. "Ef yo' go up dere yo' cotch de feber yo'self, an' die befo' mo'nin'. It am bery dangerous, sah, bery dangerous. I dassen't go up m'owase' an' de Lawd knows I tinks de worl' on my fader."

"Oh, I guess I'll take the risk. It would never do not to see the poor fellow once more before he dies."



Then away went Peter, and Solomon remarked to himself:

"Mebby I done tell too big a story 'bout dat. Fader tol' me dat I was ter tell de boss he was bery sick, but I reckon I make it too strong. Ain' sick no mo'n I be. He want'er go ter de niggab's ball dis ebenin', dat's wha' de mattah."

Peter went off and told Sam of this, and the two went up to Jeremiah's room, where they found that coon in bed.

"Hallo, Jeremiah. Sick, are you?"

"Yas, Marse Peter. I's bery sick. Will yo' tell de boss I isn' gwine ter pra'r meetin' ter-night 'an' I kean't go roun' wil' de waggin'?"

"Why, you're talking to me now!" said Sam, giving Peter a wink.

"Is I? Fo' Gawge! I fort dat was Marse Peter. Donno nuffin', boss; my head am jus' a-tonin' roun' and roun', an' I ain' got de streng ob a baby."

Sam was on one side of the bed and Peter on the other, and now Sam made a motion and gave Peter another wink.

"You're quite bad, are you?"

"Yas'r, bery bad."

"Let her go, Riley, Gallagher's deal!"

With that those two young fellows grabbed the bedclothes and yanked them clean off away down to the foot.

There lay Jeremiah on the bed in his very dirtiest suit of clothes, standing collar and patent leather shoes.

He had just finished dressing for the ball when he heard Sam and Peter coming up-stairs.

He had had just time enough to get into bed when they came in.

"Oh! you're awfully sick, ain't you?" cried Sam.

"Almost ready to die, ain't you?" added Peter.

"Thought you'd lay yourself out so as to save the undertaker the job?"

"Well, you're the healthiest looking sick nigger I ever saw."

"Sick enough to go to a ball and dance till mornin'."

"Let's bounce him."

Poor Jeremiah, taken so suddenly by surprise, could think of no excuse by which to explain his being dressed up.

In another minute Sam and Pete grabbed the bed, upset it and turned Jeremiah out upon the floor.

"Now, you lazy moke, you can get up and go to the stable and help hitch up," cried Sam. "It's a cold day when you fool me, my dandy coon."

Jeremiah was of the opinion that the weather was decidedly inclement for him, and he got up, feeling very sad, and proceeded Sam down-stairs.

He didn't go to the ball that evening, and Miss Lucie Jackson, a colored belle whom he had meant to monopolize all the evening, went off with another coon, and poor Jeremiah felt completely crushed.

No, sir, he did not go to the ball, but he did work like a beaver under Sam's direction, and was so tired when he went to bed that he didn't know whether he was afoot or on horseback.

Sam stayed in the city three or four night's longer, and then he lighted on half a dozen smaller towns where he disposed of a week or more.

Finally one morning, it was the first of April, they alighted upon a town, not too big, but just big enough for business, where there was a new hotel, new houses, new people and new everything, but Sam was satisfied if they didn't prove to be too new.

He drove around the place, scattered this, preached to the gang from the hotel steps, and saw many indications that there would be lots of excuses for his remaining in the place for some time.

After dinner, as he and Peter were sitting in the reading-room, smoking and looking over the newspapers, a sudden bright idea entered that young man's head, and he proceeded to give it a name.

"Peter, my son," said Sam, "this is the first of April."

"I am aware of it, Sammel."

"And we ought to do something to make things pleasant for Jeremiah."

"We ought indeed."

"Let us look into his room and see how we can surprise him."

The hotel was a new one, which had just been finished, and some of the rooms were not furnished with that lavishness of expenditure so common in country hotels.

The room which had been assigned to Jeremiah was on the top floor, and was something bigger than a closet.

It had an ordinary turn-up bed in it, a stand and one chair.

There was a door connecting with the next room, and Sam's professional eye lighted on this at once.

The walls were bare, there was no carpet on the floor, the one window had a broken pane, and the fan-light was cracked as a piece of old china.

Sam removed the stand and the chair, and shifted the bed so that it backed against the door of the connecting rooms.

Then he rigged up some cords and pulleys, attaching them to the gearing of the transformation bedstead, and leading them into the next room.

Then he fixed up a neat little motto on the wall opposite the bed.

This motto was a cheerful affair, and read thus:

"No Place Like Home."

After this Sam and Peter decorated the white walls with several neat pictorial designs in charcoal, and also tacked up others in similar taste.

A very graphic cartoon of a gentleman swinging from a crossbeam with a rope around his neck, while he danced a jig on nothing occupied a prominent position.

Near it was a very touching little gem representing a youth in the net of blowing his brains out with one hand and seeking his heart's blood by means of a dagger with the other.

In order to further excite cheerful emotions there were drawings of men being blown up with dynamite, other men being run over by express trains, and still others being chewed up by alligators, or lions, or other dangerous wild fowl as Bill Shake has it.

Then, too, there were pictures of coffins, bowie knives, skulls, cross bones and daggers, pistols, scaffolds and reeking bludgeons, the fresco work being executed in the highest taste.

"I guess that'll do," remarked Sam. "The circus is now postponed until this evening."

Sam and Peter then made their preparations for the expected trade at night, and did not forget to have lots of fun in the meantime.

Meeting Solomon in the afternoon, Sam took a box from his pocket and said:

"Solomon, do you like taffy?"

"Spees I do, bery much, boss," answered the young coon, his eyes getting as big as saucers.

"You're quite fond of it, eh?"

"Yas'r, very much, but I don' git bery much ob it. Fader says I orter save my money an' gib it to de chu'ch."

"Does he do so, Solomon?"

"Dunno, Marse Sam. He don' gib me none ob it. Wha' money I gits I hab to pick up one way an' anoder."

"If I give you some candy will you be a good boy?"

"Yas'r, de bes' boy yo' eber see."

"And give your father some of the taffy if he asks you for it?"

"I spees he don' car' fo' seeh tings dis days," said Solomon, looking a little dubious.

"He am gettin' ole, Marse Sam, an' his toef am po', an' I reckon he won' eat it ef I gib it to um, ralely I don'."

"Solomon, I am afraid you are not adhering strictly to the truth."

"Yas, I is, boss; yas, I is. Dat ole man don' car' no mo' fo' candy dan a pig do fo' whiskers; he wouldn' eat it ef I gib it to 'im."

"Perhaps not. Well, as you have been a good boy, here is some candy, only don't eat it all at once."

Sam then gave the little nig a small box full of nice-looking candies representing fruits of all kinds.

Solomon popped two strawberries, a cherry, a pear and a slice of orange into his capacious mouth and began to chew.

The m... chewed the less impression he could make on the stuff.

"Reckon dat am de toughest candy I eber ate," he muttered, nearly putting his jaw out of its hinges trying to bite through the stuff.

"Spec's it been made free weeks."

He tied again, and finally, when his jaws began to ache, he took a piece of the descriptive sweetmeats out of his mouth and examined it.

He had been endeavoring to masticate a chunk of rubber.

He looked around but Sam had disappeared.

"Web, if I eber did! De boss had been workin' a April fool on me! I didn't tink he do dat."

Just then along came Jeremiah and saw Solomon with a box of candy in his hand.

"Wha' yo' got dere, son?"

"Am' got nuffin'," cried Solomon, trying to hide the box.

"Dan' yo' try to fool yo' fader dat away. I see de box an' I see you a moutchin' suflin'."

Solomon did not care to fool his father with the stuff, for fear of possible consequences.

"Am' moutchin' nuffin', I tol' yo'." he protested.

Jeremiah made a grab for that ebony urechin and caught him by the collar.

Then he quickly went through his pockets and brought out the box.

"Yo's eatin' candy, is yo'? How often I tol' yo' de not to spen' yo' money fo' dem tings?"

"Dah! spen' nuffin'," whined Solomon. "De boss gib me dat fo' dem' good."

"H'm! he eber gib me nuffin', an' I reckon I's as good as mos' folks. Yo' must' eat de tuff ob dis 'cause it'll make yo' sick. I'll save it fo' yo' an' gib it yo' bum bye."

Solomon did not make any objection, which seemed strange, and Jeremiah walked off.

When he got out of sight he proceeded to sample that box of sweets.

The first crunch that he gave caused him to jump three feet.

He had set his tooth on a stone.

"Wow! what am dat!" he yelled, putting the thing out of his mouth.

The sugar coating had been removed, and he found out what it was very soon.

"H'm! dat boy ob mine am gettin' wiser and wiser every day. Jes' leane catch him when de an' I wa'm his trousers fo' him, de tuffe law'an."

Solomon kept out of the way very wisely, however, and Jeremiah saw nothing of him till after supper, and then there was no time to talk to him.

Jeremiah threw the box of candy in the fire, and so prevented any one else from being soaked, and poor Solomon was very much grieved, for he had expected to fool the cook, the chambermaid, the clerk and all the stable-hands before he got the sign.

Sam drove around into the public square at the usual time, and started in business with a great flourish of trumpets.

"Here we are, gents, the great European variety company, imported at great expense, first appearance in this country. An elegant drawing-room entertainment for nothing, no charge for standing room. After the show our grand sale at which the finest articles in the market will be sold for cash at remarkably cheap prices."

Sam got there as usual, and managed to please the crowd and rake in the cheques as well, and when he closed up for the night, it took him and Peter quite a little while to count up their cash, and square accounts.

"Not bad for the first of the month, Pezey. When the springtime comes, gentle Annie, we can afford new clothes."

"And not be obliged to leave our sisters with our uncle," added Peter.

When Jeremiah went up to bed that night he found a light burning in his room, but very dim.

There was a plain, every-day bed in one corner, with not very many blankets on it, apparently, but that was all.

There were no chairs, no bureau, no washstand, no nothing, in fact, only the room and the bed.

"Nice so't ob place, dis, fo' a ge'man used to be ob ob everyting, to sleep in," he remarked, as he hung his coat on the floor.

"H'm! 'Spec' dis would jes' suit a fellah what neber knowed what good tings was, but it don' suit dis chile fo' a bad cent."

Then he kicked his boots across the room, and hung his waistcoat and trousers beside his coat.

"Cheerful place, dis am, very cheerful. Is yo' min'," he grumbled, turning down the clothes.

"Reckon dis am jes' de so't ob place dat would make a fellah blow out de gas," he continued, as he got in bed.

Then he covered himself up, clear to his neck, and gazed around.

His eye caught the motto over the door.

"H'm! dat am de bigges' piece ob mockery ob all. 'No place like home.' H'm! Dis am de so't ob place dat make a man wish he had a home, or dat he wuz dead afo' he left it."

"Well! ef de boss tinks dis am de kin' ob bedgins I'se used ter, he am bery much mistaken, an' I tol' 'im so in de mornin', shuch's yo' baww."

"Jes' like ter catch de fellah what made dem chatters! Reckon he'd hock from me bery sudden. H'm! am ain' got time to do anyting but dat, he battah go down hess'll!"

"No place like home! Why didn' dey put up 'Welcome, an' Call Again,' or nuffin' inwid' dese' gorry, ef a fellah stay heah once, he want'er come agin de bery nex' night an' kild somebody."

The disgust depicted on that eon's countenance as he lay there and contemplated his cheerful surroundings was enough to make a cynic smile.

One look at Jeremiah would have been enough to tell you how he felt without the necessity of his uttering a word.

"Nice place fo' a ge'man an' a brother to sleep. Why don' dey put up 'Happy Dreams,' long wil' de oder matters. Dis am jes' de right scriptur ob a place fo' a man to sleep de night befor' he's a wake ter be hung. Reckon de bes' man wha' sleep' hess' er kiled hess'ef or de lan'lord. H'm! I want'er do suflin' desprit, dis am de bery place I'd choose to stay in while I was gettin' ready."

However, there seemed to be no help for it, and so Jeremiah concluded that he might as well go to sleep and forget his surroundings in slumber.

Not yet!

There were other surprises awaiting him before he could do that.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

JEREMIAH JOHN, snug in bed in his very cheerful room in the new hotel, concluded to forget his surroundings and go to sleep.

Sam and Peter in the next apartment had other ideas.

Just as Jeremiah concluded that he had better go to sleep the bed began to act very strangely.

The foot began to rise up toward the head in regular jack-knife fashion, and without the slightest regard for the probable feelings of the occupant.

Sam and Peter were indulging in a little wire pulling, as it were.

When the bed began to do the shut-up act Jeremiah sat up with a jump.

The bed did not stop, but kept on closing.

The poor coon saw that if he did not do something very sudden he would be standing on his head inside the bed, or be flattened together, his knees in his stomach.

He did not altogether know what the trouble was, turn-up bedsteads being a novelty, but he did know that he must get out of that at once.

He gave a jump toward the foot of the bed, and then the thing shut up as far as it would.

There was Jeremiah, partly on his knees, inside the bed, and unable to straighten out either up or down.

His head and hands were free, but his knees were doubled under him in a very uncomfortable position.

The motto opposite the bed had suddenly and most mysteriously changed, and now read:

"APRIL FOOL!"

"H'm! dis am a nice place fo' a gemmen to be," muttered Jeremiah. "Fus' it say 'No place like home,' an' aftah dat it am 'April Fool!' Putty down dis is. Wondah ef dis yer bed eber get back to rights agin?"

It might have done so, for it was not more than half shut up, but just then Sam and Peter suddenly rushed in, put out the gas, and then by the light from the other rooms proceeded to tie up the bed so that it would not come down into place.

They made no noise, and they worked like beavers, poor Jeremiah all the time wondering what was going to happen.

"Who dat? Why don't yo' say suffin'? Take all de money I've got but fo' Hebbin's sake lemme get down f'om dis yer bed."

What was just what they were not going to do, however, whatever else they might do.

They took particular pains that he should stay there, fastening a stout rope around the bed, and knotting it firmly, so that it might not give away before they wished it to.

Then they skipped out, and left poor Jeremiah half on his knees and half standing up, a position by no means comfortable.

They went out by the other door, locked it, and skipped down-stairs, leaving Jeremiah to enjoy his first of April snap as best he might.

Strange to say, Jeremiah did not have a hilariously enjoyable time, and was as mad as could be over the little joke.

He hollered and yelled for somebody to come and let him down, but all to no purpose.

He was alone at the top of the house, and if anybody on the lower floors heard him they did not bother to go and see what the fuss was all about.

He kept up a steady yelling for nearly an hour and at last a chambermaid came along and said:

"Stop that hollerin'. Do you want to wake up everybody in the house?"

"Come in yer an' lemme down an' I'll stop it den."

"Why don't you come down yourself, you old fool?"

"Kase I kean't. I've tied up in de bed, an' I've flahed moe' ter deff."

"Well, go to sleep and stop your noise."

"Kean't go ter sleep. De robba's hab shut me up in de bed an' I kean't get out nor do nuffin'."

"Open the door then and I'll help you out."

"H'm! how I open de do' ef I've tied up in de bed. Guess yo' must be foolin'?"

The girl had tried the door and found it locked, and that was all she cared about.

"What did you want to lock the door for?" she demanded. "If you hadn't done that I might have helped you. What's the use of locking the doors. There ain't any thieves in the house."

"Den look it 'tall? De robba's did it. Kean't yo' bus' de do' in?"

"Yes, and get sacked! No, sir, you'll have to stay there now till morning."

Then she went away and poor Jeremiah's heart sank.

Yelling did no good, for even if he did attract attention no one could enter the room.

He stayed there half the night, and then Sam stole in, cut the ropes and let the bed down with a thump.

Jeremiah had fallen into a half doze by this time, and when the bed fell he awoke with a start.

Sam got away without being discovered, for Jeremiah was too much astonished to know anything for a few minutes.

"Clar' to goodness, dem ropes done break ob deir own 'cord," he muttered, rubbing his head. "Don't see why dey couldn't done it befo', 'stead ob keepin' a fellah in mis'ry half de night!"

Then he got up, looked at his bed to see if it was going to cut up any more funny business and at last retired and went to sleep without further trouble.

He thought that he would sleep late the next morning, so as to make up for what he had lost, but as soon as it was day somebody came along with a big bell and rang as though their life depended on it.

After that somebody else came by and pounded on his door, and in a few minutes some one else came and called him.

"Fo' goodness sake, I don't git no mo' sleep dis mo'nin', dat's sartin," he growled, as he got up.

When he went down-stairs he found that he would have to wait an hour and a half for breakfast, and that neither Sam nor Peter were yet up.

"I declar' fo' it, ef dat ain't too drefful mean," he remarked. "Guess I go back to bed agin an' hab my nap out."

When he got up-stairs, however, he found his room door locked and no way of getting in.

Then he went back to the office and thought he would sleep in one of the big arm-chairs till breakfast time.

Once more he was out in his calculations.

He had no sooner ensconced himself in one of the chairs and composed himself for a nap, when in came a man with a pail of water and a broom.

Swash!

The water went slopping all over the floor and Jeremiah had to haul up his feet.

There was no rest for him, however, for the man said the chairs must all go out so that the floor could be scrubbed.

Jeremiah then went out into the hall with the chairs and thought he could finish his nap there.

Nixey!

Another man with another pail of water and another broom came along in a moment and drove the poor coon away.

Then he went out to the stable, but that also was getting its morning bath, and poor Jeremiah had to get out.

Finally he returned to the office but couldn't get in, the clerk informing him that it was closed till after breakfast, and that anyhow it was no place for coons.

"Deah me, I wondah what fo' col'd folks was brung into de worl' fo' anyhow?" he remarked. "Dero don't peah to be no place fo' dem anywhere."

The clerk had nothing to say in reply to this, and Jeremiah went off to the kitchen where he found young Solomon toasting his shins by the fire and enjoying the best kind of a time.

That made Jeremiah mad.

"Get up out o' dat, yo' lazy niggah," he cried, "an' let yo' ole fader sit down. Ain't had no mo'n half a night's res' anyhow, an' beah yo' is makin' me stan' up."

"Dey say yo' drawed picters on de wall an' dat yo'se gotter sleep in de stable aftah dis," remarked Solomon. "Kase yo' don't know nuff to use a decent room right."

"Who tol' yo' dat, son?" asked Jeremiah, opening his eyes.

"De boss ob de hotel. He say yo'm nuffin' but a sassy nigger an' yo' gotter sleep in de stable aftah dis."

"I reckon de bes' room he'm got in de hull house ain't any too good fo' me, son, an' yo' kin tell him so fo' me de nex' time yo' sees him."

Sam remained in the place one more night and Jeremiah had a chance to sleep, being undisturbed by trick beds or any such nonsense.

The next day Sam made an early start, for he had a considerable distance to travel and wanted to be on the road in good season.

The place where he was bound was a big manufacturing town about twenty miles off.

He struck it just at noon, when the mill hands, operatives and everybody else was on the street.

Jeremiah blew a tremendous blast on his bugle. Solomon beat the drum as though he had a spite against it, and Peter made the echoes ring with his cornet.

That drew the crowd and then Sam drew rein, and while all hands sent the dodgers flying, he addressed the mob in a top-story voice as follows:

"Brother weavers, fellow 'millionaires' and tramps, you see before you a knight of labor, one who labors at night to get all the dust we can scrape up so as to make a more even distribution. When I get more than I want I'll divide up with you."

See?

"I believe in a fair division, and I'm going to divide the contents of my wagon among this crowd—for a fair market value, of course. I couldn't give it away, you know. The golden age has not come to time yet."

"What I do give away, however, is a first-class entertainment, all for nothing. Singing, dancing, banjo playing, the educated dog and cat, the intelligent mule, the funny mokes and myself, the one and only Sam Smart, all at our grand free show in the square this evening."

"Positively the last appearance of our troupe this season, as base ball will soon be here and I am obliged to leave to play a champion engagement as short stop on the Kalamazulu Nine, which accounts for my not making a long stop here."

"Shoelaces strong enough to hang you; suspenders that'll stretch clear around the house and not break; highly perfumed floating toilet soap that you don't have to go diving after every time it slips out of your hands; harmonicas that will silence the cats for half a mile when you play 'em; scissors that'll cut anything and a full line of Yankee and other notions, all for sale after the show."

"Ten dollars reward for the man who can't be induced to buy after witnessing our classical entertainment and seeing our elegant and extensive stock of goods, imported, domestic, smuggled, stolen and bought at bankrupt sales; everything sold at a discount."

"Silk umbrellas, warranted to keep out the rain; parasols that will set the girls crazy, gingham bumbershoots for farmers, and circus tents for family parties, all going for a song; and that reminds me that I sometimes sing myself, or try to, and if you think you can stand it just wait a moment while I howl."

"When we hear of a joke that's been going around, And has run through the funny newspapers, When we think that it's time it was put under ground, And not vex us with any fresh capers, The thing that we call it, grows on a tree, And wears a brown overcoat, do y'q see? Chestnut!"

"The professional funny man, hardened old sinner, Will sometimes get off an old story. When he's full to the brim with good wine, after dinner, And feels all alone in his glory. If he's told the same yarn too often before, We cry, as we sadly stampele for the door, Whiskers!"

"When a married man wanders home late every night, And says that he's been to the lodge, And on every occasion, no matter how slight, Resorts to the same worn out dodge, It is time that the wives, one and all, did exclaim, And give to such played out excuses the name, Collar buttons!"

"To the boarding-house keeper, who's seen better days, To the man going 'round for subscriptions, To beggars, to writers of horse collar plays, To all engaged in deception, I would say when they bore me, And soon drive them before me: Rats!"

"Come to our great show, and subsequent sale, and you won't have occasion to make use of any of these expressions, for our goods are all of this year's make, and our jokes are the latest crop, just picked, fresh every hour, like old-fashioned molasses candy, and always on tap. Come and see us. Get up, mules."

That sort of talk caught the town, and the public square was thronged that night when Sam had been on hand a few minutes.

It was a paying crowd, too, and Peter, Jeremiah and Solomon were kept busy opening boxes, cases and packages and handing out the goods for Sam to sell.

The sales were larger than they had been for some time, and Sam seemed to be able to dispose of whatever he put up, big or little.

He just raked in the ducats, and only stopped when his stock gave out, finishing up the time with more funny business, and sending the crowd home happy.

He and Peter were as chipper as two blackbirds when they retired that night, and both agreed that they had struck it rich.

"The weather improves, don't it, my boy?" said Sam, as they sat together over a light lunch and a couple of cigars.

"It's far from cold, Samuel. If we keep on we'll own the town."

"We're good for the rest of the week, I think."

"Easy enough, and Saturday is pay-day in all the shops."

"Then we'll stay."

The next night's business was better than the first, and the third was still better, while on Saturday night the boy peddlers seemed to have struck a regular bonanza, and went to bed feeling like lords.

Every cake of soap, every box of blacking, all the tooth paste, perfumery, cough mixture and



corn salve, the last paper of pins, the final dozen collar buttons and the last box of note paper was sold, and larger goods showed a similar clearing out.

Sam expected a new lot of stuff at the next town where he intended to stay, and thither he hied himself, bright and early, Monday morning.

The coons in the last town were not quite up to Jeremiah John's standard, and he had had but little to do with them, but in the next place they were very much more to his taste, and he began to put on a great many lugs accordingly.

During the first day he managed to get pretty well acquainted, and on the next, immediately after dinner, he shook his uniform, put on his gidiest suit, and started forth to enjoy himself.

Now, it so happened that Master Solomon saw his parent sally out, and that youthful coon made up his mind to have some fun.

"Fader's goin' off mashin' an' like 'nuff won' be back till any time ob night. Wouldn't my mudder be mad ef she knowed how dat coon go on! Mebbe she goes out mashin' sheself, dough, and den she wouldn't wanter say nuffin'."

The first thing Jeremiah did was to go into a barber shop to have his face scraped before going any further.

"H'm! I know what I do now!" chuckled Solomon. "Jee' yo' wait a minnit, sah, an' yo' see fun!"

"Next!" shouted the barber as Jeremiah walked into the shop.

That big coon took off his coat, loosened his collar, stretched himself out in the chair and began to doze.

Solomon, looking in at the door on the sly, watched these preliminary proceedings with interest.

The latter juggler plastered Jeremiah's face all over with thick white suds an inch thick, and then turned to strop his razor.

Solomon opened the door, stuck in his woolly head and yelled at the top of his voice:

"Fader, fader, dey's a flash!"

Then he shut the door with a bang and dusted down the street.

The word "fire" caused Jeremiah to wake up on the instant.

Up flew his feet, and over went the foot-rest, and out dropped Jeremiah in a twinkling.

If the place was on fire it was no place for him. He made one jump for the door, gave it a yank and shut out at full speed.

The barber's apron fluttered behind him, but he did not mind or even know about it in his excitement.

The sudden appearance on the street of a big nig with his face all white was sufficient to cause an excitement in a moment.

"Flash!" yelled Jeremiah, "de barber shop. am on fire!"

Then he started to run, with no very definite idea of where he was going.

Solomon saw him come rushing out, and he just leaned against a post and laughed till he cried:

"Look o' dat big fool niggah run!" he chuckled, "Yo' a flink he'm clean gone crazy. Woudah ef he knows whar he'm gwine?"

Jeremiah did not, for a fact.

He dashed on, and had it not been for a sudden interruption would probably have run ten miles without stopping.

The sudden interruption turned the corner of the next street at the same time that Jeremiah reached that spot.

It came in the form of a man driving two pigs. The pigs were attached to rope, but they had more attachment to freedom, and had already given the man considerable trouble.

They started to run away just as Jeremiah came along.

One of them, in blundering, pig fashion, must needs run between Jeremiah's legs.

Down went that coon like the price of stocks in a panic.

He fell on top of the second pig and then there was trouble indeed.

The first pig started on the back track and that would the rope around Jeremiah's leg.

The second pig gave a grunt and a snort and started after his comrade.

He was not at all particular which way he went, consequently he dashed right between his driver's legs.

Of course there was a second upset. The driver fell over Jeremiah just as the latter was trying to get up.

"G'off my back!" yelled Jeremiah.

"Stop them pigs!" cried the driver.

He started to get up, but the porkers made another rush, and that threw him down.

"Get off'n me, I tol' yo'!" and Jeremiah made a vigorous effort to rise.

He couldn't have done it even if he had swallowed a quart of yeast.

Every movement he made only tightened the rope around his leg and set the pigs to rushing about.

Solomon stood there looking at the circus and laughing to split.

"Fo' Gawge, dat am de funnies' ting I ever see. Conidin' 'a happened bettah if I'd knowed de pigs was a-comin'."

Of course such an event could not take place in the public street without attracting a numerous crowd of spectators.

Two squealing pigs, two floundering men, one of them with black hands and white face, was enough to attract a crowd in a desert.

It wasn't long before fully one hundred and eleven persons had collected.

Some of them tried to catch the pigs.

They were only thrown down for their trouble. Everybody had advice of some kind to give.

"Shoot 'em; they're mad!"

"Twist their tails, that'll stop 'em!"

"Out the ropes!"

"Hold 'em!"

"Go get a top!"

"Stand aside and give 'em air!"

This last piece of advice was from a benevolent old gent who had an idea that somebody had fainted, or was having a fit.

Jeremiah was now pretty mad.

Twisting himself around and getting on top, in some way, he hauled off his big fist, and took the pig driver in the nose.

"Dere, now! Reckon yo' lemme get up an' go 'bout my bizness," he remarked.

Just then somebody cut the ropes, and the pigs went flying down street, scattering the crowd right and left.

"Stop 'em, stop 'em!" howled the driver, jumping up and giving chase.

He seemed to have entirely forgotten that Jeremiah had struck him.

His only anxiety now was to recapture the porkers.

Poor Jeremiah got up and surveyed himself. He was mud from head to foot, his clothes were torn, and he felt as if an army had marched over him.

"Wheah my coat?" he muttered, forgetting all about the barber shop episode, "wheah dat pig fellah go? Wheah my hat? Wheah'm I any-how?"

Just then a little policeman came up and took Jeremiah by the arm.

He couldn't reach any higher, being a good head and shoulders shorter than the coon.

"Wha' yo' want, Shorty?" asked Jeremiah, looking down.

The little cop's dignity was greatly ruffled at his being called short and he bristled up in a moment.

"You're drawing a crowd. You've got to go with me."

"Don't get excited, son," said Jeremiah. "It am had fo' little boys to oberheat deir blood. Take it cool, sah. What's de mattah? Am yo' 'fraid somebody step on yo'?"

Well, yo' jes' get in my pocket, son, an' I take care ob yo'."

The crowd laughed at this and that made the undersized copper furious.

"I'm big enough to take you in, I guess," he snorted, as he tugged at Jeremiah's arm.

"G'way dar, boy, yom too numerous," and Jeremiah, with one sweep of his arm, sent that copper flying into an ash barrel standing on the curb.

Then he went on, but suddenly an excited barber came rushing up and yelled:

"Here, you black mells, you vas bust all mein plizness up already. Off you don't bay me for dot ladder on your face I takes it owit mit your skin, py shimlules."

"Fo' de lan' sakes, I fo'got all 'bort gettin' shav'ed," muttered Jeremiah. "Guess I go back an' finish."

When he got back to the shop, however, he found Sam and Peter there, and they kept such a watch on him that he had to give up his idea of going off, and returned to the hotel, ready for business.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE spring was at hand, and Sam Smart was still on the road, making money and having lots of fun at the same time.

The weather for the most part was mild and pleasant, with now and then a shower, which only served to bring sunshine in its train.

Jeremiah was getting more independent than

ever, for Sam was working around toward New York, and that coon expected to be at home before many weeks, and consequently felt less dependent on Sam than before.

Solomon grew like a weed, and was as full of fun as when he started out, working off a sly snap now and then upon his respected parent, without the latter being any the wiser.

"Ef fader wants ter make a big fool ob hisself," he would remark, "tain't no fault ob mine ef I help him 'casionally m'self, an' it helps ter pass de time away besides."

With the spring time Jeremiah and Solomon had new uniforms, while Sam and Peter came out in middy spring suits that sent King Solomon's grandeur down several pegs for gorgeousness.

One day they entered a quiet country town all a-flying, with plumes waving, drums beating, bugles blowing and dodgers fluttering, the entire population running out to see what was up.

"Here we are again, as they say in the circus!" cried Sam, "and this time we intend to stay till we leave, no postponement on account of the weather. All desirous of making our acquaintance must be on hand in the square this evening."

"Come and see our great cat and dog circus, our educated mule, our funny darkies and our great comic singers in the funniest show on earth, all for nothing, no extra charge for standing."

"After the show you will have the chance of a lifetime to buy the best goods in the market at away down prices, all marked in plain figures, no discount for hanging us up, and extra inducements offered to large buyers."

"Buy the baby a frock, replenish your household supplies, and do a good deed by encouraging youthful ambition. My partner and myself are bashful and need coaxing, so step around this evening and patronize us. We won't be mad, we really won't."

"All I've got to say now is, that when you see our goods you'll want 'em, and when you witness our show you'll wish we lived here all the time. The celebrated professor of the cornet, Signor Jeremiah John de Smith will now toot."

All this excited the curiosity of the countrymen, and as Sam drove around town in the afternoon and gave them another waking up, he felt pretty sure of getting a good crowd around his wagon in the evening when the shades of night had begun to take a drop.

Jeremiah was thinking of other things besides business, however, when evening came.

He had heard during the afternoon that there was to be a prayer meeting in the colored church of the place that night, and he had made up his mind to attend.

It had been some time since he had been to a good old-fashioned prayer meeting, and he just allowed that he was going, business or no business.

Solomon got on to his father's intentions shortly after supper, and he resolved to have some fun.

There was no use of telling Sam about it, for Jeremiah would find it out and give him a whaling for it.

He hardly dared to cut business and follow him, having an idea that Sam would make it especially peppery for him if he did.

He made up his mind to have some fun with the old man, even if he could not be there to see it.

He therefore got a marking brush and some ink and a big square of pasteboard, on which he printed in big letters the legend:

"ISE CRAZY. I BITE. LOOK OUT."

Then he watched his chances, and as Jeremiah was sneaking out at dusk managed to detain him long enough to pin the placard to his back.

Away went the big coon, with the signboard dangling behind, but never tumbling to what was up.

He had waited till it was dark so that Sam would not see him, and now he made the best use of his time and hurried off to the darky church.

He reached it after the meeting had begun, and the brothers and sisters were all standing up, singing the opening hymn.

There was nothing bashful or modest about that coon, and he walked right up and sat in the very front seat.

As he walked up the aisle a score or more coons saw the announcement on his back.

These pointed it out to others, and there was a pretty scared lot of mokes in that congregation by the time they sat down.

Then the parson made a long-winded prayer, and no sooner had he finished than up bounced Jeremiah for his innings.

He had his back to the assembly, and everybody saw the sign.

One or two littered, but the sisters looked scared and a few glanced furtively toward the door as if questioning the feasibility of making a break at once.

"Bredren an' sistahs, de's am one ob de berry 'portantes' moments ob yo' life!" shouted Jere-



miah, waving his hands. "De adversary am abroad, seekin' who he may devour! Him bite an' shupah dan de sarpin', an' he sting like de ad-dah. He am wuss dan a mad dog in fly time, I tol' yo', an' yo' want look out fo' him, dis eben in' especially."

"Dat ole debbil wha' got de bes' ob Adam an' Eve in de gyarden ob Eden am still a-roarin' roun', bredren, an' if yo' don' look out, he scoop yo' in afo' yo' know it. 'Pent ob yo' sins, yo' nig-gahs, else de ole debbil get yo' fo' shuah."

Warming up to his work, Jeremiah became very much excited, jumped up and down, waved his arms about, flopped around, and indulged in all sorts of gymnastics.

Now he faced the congregation, and now he looked at the minister, and so everybody had a chance to read that placard on his back.

His excited manner impressed those coons with the idea that he was a dangerous creature to have hanging around loose, particularly in view of the warning before their eyes.

The parson was a timid sort of man, and when he saw that announcement he felt like sneaking out and finding a place of safety.

Jeremiah kept on, working himself into a pretty state of excitement, and before long he was all of a sweat with his exertions.

"Sense me, bredren, ef I take off my coat," he suddenly remarked. "De Lawd am nebber sham-ed to see a man in him shirt sleeves, an' yo' need-ter be eider."

"Ef dere was mo' up an' down Christians in dis worl', men wha am n't shamed to take off deir coats an' wo'k in de Lawd's wayahd, de worl' would be bettah fo' it, bredren."

Then Jeremiah yanked off his coat and those nearest the door made a break for it.

They were certain that the escaped lunatic was now going to do something desperate.

The women yelled, the parson ducked under the pulpit and there was a grand scramble.

Off came Jeremiah's coat and out rushed half of the congregation.

"Yo' am all rushin' to destruction!" cried the big coon.

"Dis am de time when yo' kin heah de voice ob wahuin' an' you won't. Bumbye, when you'm jes' dyin' to heah de wo'ld ob wisdom yo' won't take chance, yo' wicked niggans."

"Ain' wickid, no more'n yo' be," piped up one slab-sided wine to stay aroun' whar dey's a lunatic let wickid."

"Yo'm goin' to ruin, sistah, shuah's yo' bo'n. Ef yo' don' pent, de ole debbil hab yo' fo' long. Don' yo' go fo' to call de messengah ob de Lawd a lunatic, fo' den de debbil hab got a tight grip on yo' an' fus' ting yo' know he'll tote yo' off."

"Get out ob dis chu'ch!" stammered the parson, phlocking up sufficient courage to stick out his head from behind the pulpit. "Dis am no place fo' a man wha bites an' goes roun' tellin' folks ob it."

Just then Jeremiah caught sight of the card on his coat.

He had thrown the garment down, and had not noticed it till now.

When he saw the placard he jumped to the conclusion that somebody in the congregation had played a joke on him.

That was as near as he came to anything.

"Dis am no place fo' jokes," he sputtered, "an' I've shamed ob yo' all. Ef dere ober was a place whar de grace ob de Lawd was needed mo' dan noder, it am right yer in dis chu'ch! It am a won-dah to me dat de ole debbil habn't got his firs' on yo' all long afo' now!"

Then, yanking off the placard, and tearing it into bits, that very mad coon scattered the pieces far and near, grabbed his hat, put on his coat and sailed out of that church as mad as they make 'em.

If he wasn't mad when he came in, he was when he went out, and felt as if he would like to take a round out of the whole congregation, from the minister to the sexton.

There was a scattering when he started down the aisle, for the coons didn't understand what Jeremiah meant by a joke, and they were not certain if the strange coon were not an escaped lunatic after all.

Jeremiah felt that he had been insulted, and when he got to the door, he turned around, and said to the few who were left:

"Yo'm all a lot ob doomed sannahs, yo' is, an' I jes' like to see ef any ob yo' gets away, I'd jes' like ter meet you to-morrer, an' pallyze de hull lot ob yo' fo' yo'm de wussist, no-count coons I eber seed!"

With that he flounced out of the church, as mad as a horse, resolving to give prayer-meetings the shake from that time forth.

Meantime Sam was getting along just as well as though Jeremiah had been on hand, and scarcely missed him, in fact.

Had Jeremiah known that, it would have been a

sad blow to his sense of importance; but he did not, and so no harm was done.

"Now then, fellow mashers, step right up here and buy your best girls a bottle of our genuine imported perfumery, made from the choicest flowers and warranted better than the original things themselves, going with a rush at ten cents a bottle and a cake of soap thrown in.

The soap alone is worth the price, as all know who have tried it. Made from olive oil and the leaves of roses, the purest soap on the market, good for rheumatism, sore throats, coughs, colds and swelled heads, ten cents a cake and a bottle of per-fumery thrown in, will float and is always ready, will wear to the thinness of a postage stamp. Read our testimonials from leading jailbirds throughout the land. People that used this soap ten years ago have used none since.

"Here you have the essence of roses, the per-fume of the violet, the soft odor of the gentle sun-flower, and the magic aroma of the modest dande-lion, all combined in our non-corrosive, incom-bustible perfumery at ten cents a bottle, no extra charge for the label. Pass up your handkerchiefs, they will be returned, never fear. I never use one myself, and so you're safe. Peter, douse these wipers with our famous cologne, can be smelt at forty rods and will last all day.

"Catch on to our double-distilled tooth-paste, makes the teeth as white as milk and as sweet as silk, as nice as honey for a little money, always handy and as good as candy, takes the cake and is easy to take, ten cents a box and a tooth-brush free, no excuse for having soiled teeth when this thing is on the market.

"The next thing we offer is our patent cravat for mice, rats and other vermin, a perfect fit and a sure cure. Any mice wearing these cravats will die for joy, and that's what you want. Beats the old-fashioned mouse-trap all to smash. Catches the mouse, chucks him into a barrel and sets itself for the next sucker of a mouse that comes along. Price ten cents, nickel-plated five cents extra, the nickel-plate catches the high-toned mice, the com-mon ones only snare the no-account rodents, though a mouse is a mouse all over the house. Spand, fifteen cents and clear your mansions of these pests, better than a cat, for you don't have to feed it, it won't sit out on the fence of nights and howl, and it never has kittens. You never invest fifteen cents more profitably in all your life.

"The next thing I offer to this intelligent audi-ence is our patent non-conducting wire busile, can be made any size, won't explode, will outlast the ordinary ones, can be worn in any climate, is as good for a dog muzzle or a fly tatcher as for anything else, and gives grace, beauty and ele-gance to the form and all for the absurdly small price of half a dollar. All the ladies want them; the prettier they are the greater the demand. Fetch out the life-preservers, Peter, there's going to be a rush."

Sam's tongue was greased this evening and he rattled on at railroad speed, now throwing in a batch of jokes or a verse or two of a song and hitting the bull's eye every shot.

The crowd was in a buying mood, and was as eager for boys' ready made suits, match boxes, cooking stoves and shoe blacking as for toilet soap or perfumery.

Peter and Solomon were kept busy passing up bundles and making change, and Sam, keeping his eye on the crowd, spotted every new comer and roped him in as slick as goose grease.

"Now, brother politicians, I'm going to sing you a few hundred verses of my latest ballad. Hear-ers will be supplied for those who give out before it's over. Let her go, bullies:

If you chance to meet your best girl on the street  
It's what you might expect.  
You interchange greetings so loving and sweet,  
It's what you might expect;  
You first swap impressions concerning the weather,  
Then the fashions, for which you don't care a feather,  
And at last you rush off to dinner together,  
It's what you might expect.

When a man gets spliced to an anburn-haired wife,  
It's what you might expect  
He has no more peace for the rest of his life,  
It's what you might expect;  
When he takes her out walking, some funny man  
Is sure to remark about a white horse,  
Till at last he runs off and gets a divorce,  
It's what you might expect.

When you've health and good fortune it seems rather  
funny  
Though it's what you might expect,  
There are plenty of fellows to help spend your money,  
It's what you might expect;  
But when poverty comes and you are dead broke,  
You'll find your friends vanish—indeed it's no joke—  
For their vows of affection will all end in smoke,  
It's what you might expect."

"Yes, fellow aristocrats, it's what you might ex-pect, and it's also what you might expect that my goods are cheaper and better than any on the mar-

ket. The more we sell, the cheaper you can get 'em, so just step and lower the price by buying at wholesale.

"Linen handkerchiefs, six for a quarter, can be used for mufflers, tablecloths, babies' dresses, or sun umbrellas, fancy borders to match the com-plexion, and full directions for making over into stockings, neckties or dusters, the longer you have 'em, the more you'll like 'em, going at rock bot-tom prices, the chance of a lifetime.

"I see our African brother approaching, and I know that his mouth is just aching to play the bugle. Jeremiah, you've been off mashing. Don't deny it, but just step up here and show the ladies how sweetly you can play. It's worth coming ten miles to hear this coon tackle the cornet, fellow citizens. Why I have to take him out of New York every summer for fear some big hotel man will offer him a thousand dollars a week to play at Coney Island, I do really."

Jeremiah had now returned, and of course Sam caught sight of him as soon as he approached the wagon, and gave him a polite invitation to attend to business.

"Ain' been mashin' 'tall," muttered Jeremiah, under his breath. "Been to pra'r-meetin', but I'll neber go agin, no, neber! Neber war so 'sulted in all my life. Dem coons is de bigges' lot ob sin-nahs I eber see, an' I jes' wish de ole boy would cotch 'em all dis bery night."

Sam found out what had happened later on in the evening, and he at once tumbled to Solomon's little racket, though he did not give the young coon away.

"That boy Solomon is getting too fly for his pop," said Sam to Peter, when he related Jerem-iah's adventure at the prayer-meeting. "The first thing we know he'll be putting up jobs on us."

"If he does he'll have to wear sole leather in the seat of his trousers," observed Peter, "for I'll tan his hide so that you can't shoot a bullet through it if he does."

"Oh, the old man has hardened him to that sort of thing long before this," laughed Sam, "and nothing short of a pile driver would make any im-pression on him."

One warm, pleasant afternoon, toward the end of April, when everything was blooming and giving promise of an early summer, Jeremiah went to Sam and said:

"Boss, kin I go off dis afternoon fo' a lilly while?"

"The camp meeting season hasn't opened yet, has it, Jeremiah John?" asked Sam.

"No, sah, an' I don' want go to cam' meetin' eider."

"Going off on the mash?"

"No, sah, I've goin' ober to de creek to take a swim. Dere is a bully place just out ob town an' de watah am warm as tons'. Kin I go?"

"Can you go in swimming?" asked Sam with a grin.

"Yas'r."

"Certainly. Go and wash yourself, you need it bad enough, and I say?"

"Wha' dat, boss?"

"Don't forget to take a bucket of softsoap and a scrubbing brush along with you."

Jeremiah was too well satisfied with the per-mission to get off, to take offense at Sam's little innuendoes, and he went away feeling as happy as the much mentioned clam in a freshet.

"Peter, my son," said Sam to his partner, a few minutes later, as the two met on the hotel veran-da, "the rivers hereabouts will rise."

"Turned weather prophet, have you?"

"Yes, and I don't know whether profit or loss will result therefrom."

"Come down from the roof, Samuel. That gag was gray headed years before you were born. What about the rivers?"

"They will presently rise."

"How do you know?"

"Jeremiah John and the rest of him has gone swimmin'."

"You don't mention it?"

"But I do, and I will whisper something in your ear, Pedro."

"Go on with the whisper."

"There is material for a fresh laid, gilt edge snap in this."

"I'm listening."

"Let us hie us to the brook whero the gentle Jeremiah bathes, and, Peter—"

Here Sam put his mouth to his chum's ear and whispered something which caused Peter to smile very audibly.

"First rate," he remarked, "but we must leave him something."

"I'll look out for that, and this is the part of the snap that's patented."

A few minutes later the boy peddlers started down the road, and presently struck into the woods on their way to the brook.

Meantime Jeremiah had reached a quiet, seclud-



ed spot on the banks of the stream where there was a deep pool with a sandy bottom, a shelving beach, and everything else lovely.

"I declar' fo' it, dis am de fus' time I've had a good swim dis yeah," he remarked, as he proceeded to remove his gaudy garments.

He had brought the requirements for a first-class bath along with him, and evidently meant to enjoy himself.

He had a sponge as big as his head, a cake of soap that would have sufficed to do the family washing for a month, a huge Turkish towel as large as a table cloth, and a pair of bathing trunks.

The latter was a very high-toned article, and demonstrated very clearly the fact that Jeremiah could be stylish in the water as well as anywhere else.

The trunks were striped red, white and blue, and each stripe was fully four inches wide; but then as Jeremiah was no featherweight he required a big pair of trunks, and nothing was lost of the pattern.

That coon looked just too giddy for anything in his striped trunks, and might easily have been taken for a rainbow as he strutted about on the bank, preparatory to taking his initial plunge.

"Glad dat boy Solomon ob mine ain' aroun'," he mused. "He'm ails up to mischief, an' likes not he go to jugglin' wif my close ef he knowed I was heah."

There was no Solomon either in sight or hearing, however, and after sunning himself for a time, Jeremiah slipped into the stream and began swimming around, looking like a porpoise in bathing tights.

Presently, as he was disporting himself in the deepest part of the pool, kicking and splashing and having a great time generally, along came Sam Smart and Peter Pocket.

Jeremiah's back was turned toward the bank and he therefore could not see the two jokers.

They took particular pains that he might not, either, for they sneaked down behind the bushes and crept cautiously toward the spot where the coon had placed his clothes.

Jeremiah was still floundering about, unsuspecting of evil, when Sam and Peter reached cautiously through the bushes and abstracted his garments.

Then Peter left something in their place, and he and Sam noiselessly withdrew.

"There'll be weeping and wailing when that coon discovers what's up," remarked Sam when he and Peter had got at laughing distance from the swimming hole.

"Right you are, Samivel, and if I didn't want to spoil things, I'd give half a dollar to see the fun."

"So would I, but we'd better mosey."

And they moseyed forthwith.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THAT was an elegant swim that Jeremiah had in the creek that warm spring afternoon.

It was also a daisy little racket which Sam and Peter put up on him as he was kicking around in deep water, mindful of nothing but the fun he was having.

After a time, thinking he had had all the fun he wanted, and beginning to feel cool, he swam to shore, and stepped out upon the bank.

A good rub-down with his big towel made him feel like a new coon in town, and then he looked around for his clothes.

Either they had taken to themselves wings and skipped out while he was in swimming, or he was so blind that he could not see them.

He saw something lying on the bank, but could hardly believe that they were the ample garments he was accustomed to wearing.

He lifted up and held out a very small pair of knee breeches and a jacket just their match in point of size.

Astonishment was no name for the expression on the face of that surprised coon as he gazed upon these miniature garments.

By the look of them they must have been made for a boy of six and small at that.

Sam kept such things in his stock, and that was how he came to have them on this occasion.

"Fo' de lan' ob glory! how my close hab shrunk!" exclaimed Jeremiah.

He could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Dat's wha' comes ob buyin' dem cheap tings. Leab' 'em out in de aiah an' dey shrink all up to nuff."

The things would certainly fit the big moke much too soon, and it is doubtful if even Solomon could have gotten into them.

The huge daisy in his gorgeous bathing tights, and nothing else, holding up those infantile garments and wondering how he was ever going to get into them, was a sight to make a mule laugh.

"Fo' goodness sake, eider I mus' hab swelled up in de watah or dem garments mus' hab shrunk like de bery doose," he observed.

He couldn't seem to make the case out at all.

He evidently thought the clothes were his, but how they got so little was what puzzled him.

"How in time I get into dem t'ing? Spec's I hab to stan' in de sun till I melt, an' den po' m'se'f into dem."

However, he generally wore more than a coat and a pair of trousers, and he began looking for his shirt and other habiliments.

They were *non est getatabus*, not to be found, in other words.

Shirt, shoes and underclothing had departed.

"H'm! I jes' know what am de mattah now!" suddenly exclaimed Jeremiah, in a tone of deep conviction.

He had solved the mystery.

"Dat boy Solomon hab been up to him tricks ag'in, an' hab done taken my close away an' put dese in deir place. Won' he coteh it when I see 'um!"

The tone showed that Solomon would be likely to have a seance in the woodshed in company with his pa and a trunk strap when next they met.

"De idea ob his leabin' me dese lilly t'ings! Why, dey wouldn' fit him, he ownse'f, to say nuffin' ob a good size fellah like me! Won' dere be wah when I coteh dat boy? M—m!"

However, he could not stand there on the bank all the afternoon, moralizing.

He must get home somehow or other, clothes or no clothes.

He had his tights and the big towel, and so was not absolutely naked.

He might get back to the hotel without being seen.

At any rate he meant to chance it.

If he was discovered, he could hoof it, that was all.

Having come to this conclusion, he tucked the end of the towel in the belt of his tights and let it hang down in front like an apron.

Then, with the juvenile wearing apparel in his hands, he started out for the hotel.

Fortunately, he reached it unobserved.

As he stepped on the veranda, however, Sam and Peter came out of the office.

It was quite by accident of course.

They had not been watching for that coon for the last ten minutes.

Oh, no, certainly not.

Not only Sam and Peter, but two or three hay-seeders, the clerk, the hall-boy and the proprietor also came out.

"Hallo, Jeremiah," said Sam, "why this gorgeousness?"

"Turned wild man of the woods, have you?" queried Peter.

"Find it too warm for clothes up here?" asked the clerk.

"Wall, I vum, ef that ain't the durnedest!" roared one of the countrymen.

"I swan if it ain't, by gosh!" coincided the other representative from Wayback.

"Get on to his shins," chuckled the hall-boy.

"Wears an apron, too. Settin' the fashion I guess."

"He don't want to miss showing them stunning tights, I tell you."

Then all hands laughed, and Jeremiah got mad.

"Got tired of wearing clothes, Jeremiah?" asked Sam.

"No, sah, I hasn't, but I'd jes' like ter know how yo' spec a feller to get into dese ere t'ings?"

With that the indignant coon displayed the suggestion of a wardrobe that had been left in the place of his own generous apparel.

Then there was another howl. All hands had something to say.

"How you must have grown!"

"Mr! what a shrinkage!"

"The sun must have been awful hot!"

"Guess the water swelled him?"

"Put a stone on his head and press him out."

"Better go and dress yourself, Jeremiah," said Sam.

"How kin I dress m'se'f when I ain't got no close?" snorted the coon. "Ef I coteh de feller wha' took away my t'ings I bus' his jaw."

"Haven't any clothes, eh?"

"No, sah."

"Where's your uniform?"

"Lor' sakes, I done fo'get dat. To be sure, I've got lots ob close. All de same, I wahm dat boy Solomon when I fin' him."

"What's the matter with him?"

"What de mattah wif him? Why, dila' he stole my close an' put dese lilly ones ob his own in place ob 'em."

"Solomon couldn't wear those unless you squeeze him into them and then they'd split."

"All de same he done it an' I make him mem-

went off in a huff, first to dress and then to find and wallop Solomon.

When he reached his room he found his clothes all laid out upon the bed, in good order and nothing missing.

"Derel now I know it was dat boy wha' took 'um! Ef it had been a tramp I'd neber hab seed 'em agin! Ef I don' larn dat boy a lesson dis time, it'll be kase I ain't got muckle 'nuff to hol' out!"

Having dressed himself, that angry coon next proceeded to hunt up Solomon.

Sam did not care to have the young coon thrashed for something he knew nothing about, however, and he found him before Jeremiah came down and said:

"Solomon, I want you to take the very first train to the next town and stay there till I come. I want you to flood the place with circulars."

"A' right, boss, I sow 'em knee deep."

"You'll find a bundle of them at the station, and I'll give you an order on the agent for them. I'll be along to-morrow."

Solomon got away by the next train, which left in ten minutes, and while he was scurrying along the country at the rate of forty miles an hour his father was hunting high and low for him.

"Drat dat boy! I reckon he knowed I wanted to lick him jes' as well as nuffin'. A'right! I'll gub it to 'um all de habdah when I do fin' 'um—jes' see if I don'!"

If Solomon had known of the search that was being made for him he would doubtless have indulged in considerable more grinning than he did at the thought of going off all by himself.

When it came time to hitch up Jeremiah went to Sam and said sadly:

"Boss, I do b'lebe nuffin' hab happened to dat boy ob mine. He ain't come fo' his suppah, an' he mus' be los'."

"Oh, I guess he's all right, Jeremiah. Solomon is no fool."

"Deed he ain't, Marso Sam, but ef he ain't los' den he's run away."

"What makes you think so?"

"Case he done put up dat job on me when I was in swimmin' dis aftahnoon, an' he knows he get licked fo' it when I coteh 'um."

"How do you know he did it?"

"It am jis' like him. He am gettin' too big fo' his boots, an' I lick de nonsense out'n him jes' soon's I coteh 'um."

"You're too hard on him, Jeremiah."

"No, I ain't. Yo' donno half de tricks dat boy do, Marso Sam."

"No?"

"No, sah. De oder day he fill de toe of my stockin' full ob cobblah's wax, an' I was all night, mostly, tryin' to get it off."

"Is that so?"

"Yas'r, an' anoder time he nail my boots to de flo', and when I put my foot in 'em I couldn' move. Fought I was paralyzed."

"That was good."

"Yas'r, an' anoder time he tie a rope roun' my big toe, an' fasten de oder end to de bedpost, an' den yell like de debbil, an' when I jump up I fix de hull toe was mos' yanked off me."

"Why, Solomon is getting to be quite a joker, isn't he?"

"He am gettin' to be too fresh, dat's what he is. Not mo'n free days back he filled my every-day hat half full ob tah, an' lef it stan'in' on de table in de hall. I come out in de dark, put on de hat wifout lookin' in it, an' got kivered all ober wif nasty tah. Wow! I kin smell him yet."

"Oh, you musn't mind all that, Jeremiah. It's only his natural exuberance cropping out."

"Well, I cut it sho't whatever it am. Tol' yo' another trick he do. He took de—"

"I haven't got time to listen to any more of Solomon's rackets, Jeremiah," interrupted Sam, frowning that there would be no end to the recital. "I'll take a night off some time and let you tell me all about it."

"Ef he hab run away," muttered Jeremiah, "I jes' hope he'll run 'cross some ob de fellers I've seed. Dey'd wallop him wif a caht pole ef he on'y opened him head."

Sam now hitched up and drove out into the public square, where the lights, the music and Sam's melodious voice soon drew a big crowd.

"This is my last appearance in town, ladies and gentlemen," yelled Sam, "prior to going to Europe and around the world. The trip will take me ten years. So, if you want to get bargains, get 'em now, as it is your last chance. Special inducements to ladies."

"There was a man up in Dalmuth. Who lost every blessed old tooth From chewing spruce gum. And now he's a bun, I'm telling you only the truth."

"There's a moral to this poem. The first man that finds it can have a box of Smart's tooth paste, ordinary price, a quarter a box, hardens the gums."



keeps you from chewing tobacco, sweetens the breath, makes the hair curl, and produces a beard on the smoothest face after five applications, patent applied for.

"An old woman down in New York,  
Used to pick her teeth with a fork  
Till at last she did bore  
A hole through her jawr,  
And it had to be plugged with a cork,

"There's a moral attached to this little narrative also. If the old woman had used my disinfecting, silver-plated tooth paste, she wouldn't have had to take such heroic measures to keep her mouth in order. Full history of this case, together with ninety-nine others, given away with every box of the paste. Don't forget that this is the last chance you have, for to-morrow I'm going to skip. Sample boxes five cents, tooth brush thrown in.

"Couple on to our magnetic hair brush, makes hair grow on bald heads, strengthens the scalp and restores the hair. Married men with shrewish wives, take particular attention. Bald-headed men step up and invest. It won't interfere with your sitting in the front row at the ballet, and bad boys in the gallery won't have your head as a target for beans, hereafter. Twenty-five cents buys a brush and full directions how to use it. Baldness would be unknown if these brushes were more universally used. I had a big crop of hair myself when I was only a year old just because I used one of these brushes."

When business began to slack up, Sam slung in a few songs and jokes, Jeremiah played the bugle, and Peter put Moses and the mule through their exercises.

Finally the crowd began to thin out and Sam extinguished the lights, shut up the wagon and drove back to the hotel, well pleased with his night's work.

The next morning they left town, poor Jeremiah mourning for the lost Solomon.

He thought more of that boy than he supposed he had, and he now confided to Sam that if that young coon would only return he would forgive him for all his tricks.

"Bress him lilly habt, I lubs dat boy mo'n yo' kin fink, Marse Sam," he said, "an' ef he comes back, I jes' take him to my habt an' hug him. I neber knowed befo' how much I lubbed dat chile."

"Yes, Solomon is a pretty good boy," said Sam, "but you abused him, and I don't think you'll ever see him again."

"Does yo' fink so boss?" asked Jeremiah John, drawing a long face.

"Certainly. I don't blame the boy for running away, when you used to club him so much."

"Don' yo' fink he hab run away?"

"Of course. He ought to be in New York by this time."

"Well, den he run home to him mudder," said Jeremiah gleefully, "an' I see him agin."

"Oh, he won't stay in New York. He'll get on a ship and go to China or Australia or some other place."

"De po' lilly kid! I feel so sorry fo' him, I donno wha' ter do."

"Like enough he'll be lost at sea, anyhow."

"Oh, Marse Sam, how kin yo' talk like dat?"

"Or maybe he's been run over by the cars already."

"Don' yo' talk like dat!" blubbered Jeremiah. "Yo' broke my habt, 'deed yo' do," and the big coon bellowed like a calf.

Sam did not say any more, but Peter got at Jeremiah, and pictured all sorts of dreadful things as happening to Solomon till poor Jeremiah was as nervous as a cat, and blubbered steadily for five miles.

When the wagon drove into the next town, there stood Solomon on the post-office steps swinging his hat, and by the amount of waste paper strewn about, Sam knew that he had been hard at work.

When the wagon stopped Jeremiah suddenly ceased his weeping, straightened up, jumped down, threw Solomon across his knee, gave three or four sockers with his open hand, and exclaimed, excitedly:

"Dere! yo' good fo' nuffin' young imp, run away an' break yo' fader's habt agin, will yo'? Ef I catch yo' at it I'll gib yo' sash a whalin' dat yo' kean't walk fo' a mon!"

After all Jeremiah's tears and lamentations, this sudden change of front became doubly comical, and Sam and Peter both laughed till they cried.

Solomon did not think it so funny, and he soon broke away from his fond parent and went scurrying across the street.

"Neber run away 'tall, yo' ole niggah!" he cried. "De boss done sen' me down yer las' night to work up de town. Ef yo' tech me agin I will run away fo' suah, an' neber come back no mo'; no sash, neber!"

Then Jeremiah took a great big tumble and transferred his anger from Solomon to Sam Smart.

"De idee! De boss know whar dat boy was all

de time an' he go to tellin' me all sorts ob stories 'bout him goin' to sea an' gettin' run ober an' all dat! Didn' fink dat ob de boss, I didn'."

Solomon kept out of Jeremiah's way all that day, which was a useless precaution, for the coon had forgotten all about the promised licking and was only mad at Sam.

The boy peddlers did pretty well in this town, thanks to Solomon, and Sam remained two or three days longer than he had intended.

Then Sam went rattling through the country for a week or so, stopping only one night in a town, and hurrying on toward the city, where he intended to end up his trip.

One day he drove into a bustling town, and attracted lots of attention on account of his gorgeous wagon, his funny coons, his own nobby ways, and the fun he made.

"I haven't got time to stop very long, ladies and gentlemen," he sang out from the rear of the wagon that evening when the lamps were lighted and a crowd stood around, "but while I'm here I'm going to make things hustle. There are lots of things I could tell you if I only had time to stop, but I haven't, and so I'm just going to sell all I can. But that reminds me of a song. Tune up the brass band, Peter, and I will tell my kind friends what I would do if I only had time to stop."

"I would tell you some things, both funny and queer, If I only had time to stop,  
I would tell you of things worth coming to hear, If I only had time to stop,  
I would tell you why drinking too much wine and beer Will make e'en a saint go off on his ear, If I only had time to stop,  
I would tell many things to cause you surprise, If I only had time to stop,  
And the way for a foolish man to become wise, If I only had time to stop,  
What base ball team will take the first prize, And when dudes beg'n to open their eyes, If I only had time to stop,  
I would tell who would win in the next White House race, If I only had time to stop,  
And what horses are certain to collar first place, If I only had time to stop,  
How society girls can keep up the pace And how to get rich on nothing but face, If I only had time to stop,  
I could tell you some things that you don't learn at school, If I only had time to stop,  
And how to avoid the hind legs of a mule, If I only had time to stop,  
I could show how a man is naught but a fool, If he doesn't live up to the square and fair rule, But I haven't got time to stop."

This effusion tickled the crowd, and they called for more verses, when Sam quietly informed them that if he only had time to stop he would do it; but he hadn't, and so must proceed to business.

Things went like hot cakes or a high hat in a gale and when Sam left town the next morning, he took away a nice little bundle with which to help pay his expenses during the sweet summer-time.

When they reached the next town and had settled down, Jeremiah John took it into his head, just before supper-time, that he had not had any vacation for some time, and he would cut business that evening and go and see the sights.

Sam saw him sneaking off just at dusk, but he didn't take the trouble to call him back, pretending not to see him.

"I'll fire that coon in a week or so," he remarked, "and so I might as well let him do as he likes just now."

When it came time to hitch up, however, Peter asked Sam where the big mule was.

"Gone off to a coon wedding or a prayer-meeting, I suppose," Sam replied. "I saw him sneaking off down the road and over the bridge just before seven o'clock."

"And you let him go?"

"Certainly,"

"I'll fix him for that," chuckled Peter. "He don't care a cent for what you say nowadays."

"Oh, well, what's the use in bothering with him. We'll be at home in a short time and then I'll give him the grand bounce."

"I'll give it to him this evening," muttered Peter, with a chuckle.

After the sale was over he got four big fellows that hung around the hotel to go and meet Jeremiah as he came over the bridge.

They knew that coon, and as it was bright moonlight, they would have no difficulty in recognizing him.

Jeremiah had been calling on a widow, whose acquaintance he had made in the afternoon, and his stay was a long one.

It was nearly midnight when he came along the road, singing to keep himself company, and wondering if Sam would say anything.

"Don' car' ef he does," he sniffed. "Guess I'se titled to a little res' now an' den. Ef it hadn' been fo' me his ole show wouldn' ha' mounted to nuffin'. Guess ef I hadn' been 'long he wouldn' made his salt. De show wouldn' pay spenses ef I hadn' been wif it, an' I guess I kin take a vacation whenever I like. Hallo, heah am de bridge. Dey ain't much funder to go."

As he reached the middle of the bridge, right over the rushing water, four forms suddenly jumped out from he couldn't tell where, and grabbed him.

"Over with him, boys. He wants a bath."

Then before the luckless Jeremiah could struggle or protest or yell, the four fellows lifted him off his feet and sent him headlong off the bridge into the water at its deepest point.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SPASH!

Right into the river went Jeremiah, clean over his ankles, but as he went head-first that was quite enough.

He went down in fifteen feet of water, and when he reached the bottom the river stopped over its banks.

When he came up again, sputtering and blowing, he had the field to himself.

Nobody was in sight, and there was the bridge and the moon and the river just the same as before.

"Fought somebody frowed me off de bridge, but I reckon I mus' hab fallen ober m'self," he muttered, as he started to swim to shore.

The river ran very swiftly, and that Jumbo coon, burdened as he was with all his clothes, and, worse yet, his canal-boat shoes, found swimming anything but an easy job under the circumstances.

"Fo' goodness' sakes, dem shoes ob mine am heaby as lead," he grunted. "Wondah if I kean' pull 'em off?"

Now pulling off one's shoes in the water is not a particularly simple task even when one is lithe and active.

In the case of a big, overgrown n'g like Jeremiah John Joseph the job presented many obstacles.

The minute he reached down after his shoes he went under and swallowed a quart or two of muddy water.

He tried this thing three or four times before he had the sense to give it up.

"Wow! dat am de dirties' fresh watah I eber tasted," he muttered. "Shouldn't wondah if all de sewahs in de willage emptied into it. I be awful sick ef I take any mo' ob it, an' I done hab to break my wo'd an' take some sperrits to took away de tas'e ob it."

All this time the current was taking Jeremiah down stream, his progress toward the bank being nothing to speak of.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, please come an' help a po' niggah!" he yelled. "Oh, Lawd, don' let de ole debtil catch me dis time an' I do anyfing yo' like. Fo' massy sakes sabe me dis time, deah Lawd, an' I neber sass de boss any mo'."

Jeremiah did not stop swimming to utter this petition, for he realized that he might as well do all he could to help himself; even if he did call in outside aid.

He was getting nearer to the bank and outside the main current, and that was something at least.

He finally reached the bank, but found it steep and slippery, the water being too deep for him to wade.

"Guess I go funder," he muttered, but he went further only to fare worse, as is often the case.

Here there was a stone wall built right down to the water's edge, and reaching far above his head.

"Fo' de lan' sakes, wha' do folks wanter build a wall heah fo'?" growled that disgusted coon as he stuck his fingers in the chinks and tried to hold on.

He had to let go, and down he went to the muddy bottom, coming up presently, blowing like a steamboat.

He was getting tired out and frightened, and now he yelled with all his might for assistance.

The current carried him down stream, but after a time the walls and the steep banks gave place to shallows and low banks, and here the worn-out coon made a landing.

"Nice time ob night dis am to be gettin' home!" he muttered, as he heard a clock strike one, forgetting that if he had stuck to business he would have been at home and in bed long before.

He struck for the first road and went stumping along in the dust, the water squirting out of his shoes at every step and dripping from his saturated garments.

"Massy sakes alibe, ef dey don' hab bridges what a feller kean't walk ober wifout fallin' into de riber, wha' makes dey hab any 'tall? Dat's wha' I'd like to know?"



"De idea ob my tumblin' inter de riber like dat, jes' s'f I wuz drunk an' didn' know nuffin'! I s'mos' 'shamed ob mysel', so I is, an' ef de boss fin' it out, he luff like de mi-chief, I s'pect."

"Den ter go fallin' in dat nassy, muddy watah, wha' jes' come out'n de sewah, I dassay. Golly! Reckon I neber get de tase out ob my mouf, neber!"

"Fo' de lub ob de Lawd, dis am de lonesome's road I eber traveled. Dey don' seem to be nobody stirrin'. Wouler how much funder it am? Ef I wasn' a membah ob de church, an' had saif in de Lawd, reckon I'd be as skeered as a mouse to go along like dis all alone."

"Bredren, dis yer road 'min's me ob de road to hebben. It don' 'peah to be bery pleasan', but it leads stret to de place whar yo' want go ef yo' on'y foller it an' don' tone to de right nor de lef'."

"On'y foller de stret road, bredren, and yo's boun' ter git to heaben, an' den de ole debbil kean tone yo' aside or 'suade yo' to go 'long o' him, an' when yo' git to de gret white gates an' de angel ob de Lawd comes down tootin' on a horn an' gibs yo' a new suit ob close to weah an' a bran new silk hat to put on yo' head, dat ole debbil he feel so mad he jes' like to kiek hese'f all roun' town, an' den de lilly debbils day hab to look out kase de boss he make 'em wo'k all de hanadah stirrin' up de flah to roas' de nex' po' sannah de boss debbil coteh a nappin'."

"Yes, bredren, de road am lonely, but it am de on'y one dat yo' kin be shuah ob taken yo' home to de promised lan'. Les' sing de hundred an' af' hymn."

"Oh, wha's gwine to heaben by de lightnin' s'press?"

Don' yo' hear dem bells?

Put on yo' crown an' yo' weddin'-dress—

Don' yo' heah dem bells?

Oh, I s'e gwine to glory on de berry fus' train—

Don' yo' heah dem bells?

Fo' I'll neber hab sech a good chance again—

Golly! jes' heah dem bells!"

At this juncture Jeremiah's meditations and song were rudely interrupted.

"Wow-wow, bow-wow-wow, gruh!"

A big brute of a dog, with a voice like a fog-horn, came bouncing out of a yard and dashed at the coon's heels.

He was a watch-dog, and his slumbers having been broken by Jeremiah's warbling, he felt greatly insulted, and came out to resent the injury done to him.

"Fo' goodness' sake!" yelled that frightened coon, as he suddenly tore down the road, the dog in full chase.

He forgot all about the road to heaven, and everything else, devoting all his attention to getting away from that dog as soon as possible.

He might have paralyzed that barker by one kiek of his big shoes, but he was too much frightened to think of this, and took to his heels.

The dog followed him for nearly half a mile, yelping and barking and snapping till poor Jeremiah was about scared out of the few senses he had.

Then that dog concluded to go home, but Jeremiah was so broken up that he ran and ran and never stopped till he had gone nearly a mile past the hotel, and was ready to drop from sheer exhaustion.

The clock struck three when he reached the house at last, and found everything dark and silent.

"Gorry! I s'e gotter git in somehow or rudder," he muttered. "Kean't stay out heah all night in dese wet close fo' anyfing."

Then he stepped up to the front door and pounded on it with both fists.

Pretty soon a window was thrown up, a shotgun stuck out, and a voice heard, saying:

"Go away from here, or I'll fill you full of holes in ten seconds."

"Ho! on, ho! on, don' shoot! Dis am whar I b'long!"

"Stay there, then, if you belong there."

"No, I d'n' belong yer, I b'long in de house."

"Well, you can't get in now, if you do belong here."

"Wha's de reason I kean't?" and Jeremiah began to pound again. "Reckon I wake up Solomon an' he come al' lanime in."

"Go away!" yelled the man at the window above.

"Wan' do it!" and Jeremiah kicked as well as pounded.

Bang!

A sudden report startled the echoes for a mile around.

Luckily Jeremiah was not hit, but the shot flew about him like hail.

"Whoa dar! hol' on, don' yo' shoot me. I hain' done nuffin'. Stop o' dat, I tol' yo'."

"Go away, then."

"I won' do it," and the hammering and kicking were resumed.

Bang!

Fortunately, the porch protected that importunate coon, or he would have been riddled with buck-shot of the largest size.

"Go away, you chicken-stealing nigger!" yelled the man with the gun.

Jeremiah said nothing, but stood close in under the veranda and smack against the door.

"There! I reckon I've settled him," muttered the landlord. "That young feller had no business to fetch a nigger to the hotel anyhow. The stable was good enough for him."

However, as he had not seen Jeremiah depart, and the noise had ceased, he began to fear that he had killed the big darky.

That frightened him, for, although a big bully, he had a terror of the law, and imagined that he would be hanged at daybreak.

He had only meant to scare the coon; but now he felt sure that he had killed him, and was nearly wild.

The noise had aroused the house, and everybody wanted to know what the fuss was about.

Peter knew, and he told Sam, the latter laughing to choke.

"Let the boss let him in," he said. "I'll bet poor Jeremiah is half scared to death."

The landlord certainly was in that condition, and shook like a leaf.

"I'll bet I've killed him," he gasped. "I'd better go down, secure the body and hide it before it's found."

Then he took a candle and went down-stairs in his shirt and trousers, leaving the shotgun in his room.

Jeremiah looked through the key-hole, saw the light coming down and chuckled.

"Reckon de lan'ld fluk I s'e dead, an' he am comin' to take me in," he muttered. "I fix him, see ef I don'."

Then he stood alongside the door, and presently the bolts, chains and locks were withdrawn, and it slowly opened.

Jeremiah suddenly gave a yell, dashed open the door, grabbed the landlord by the back of the neck and then slung him out in the middle of the road.

In a moment the door was closed and fastened, and Jeremiah was laughing to split his sides.

"Yah-yah! dere's de lan'ld out in de col' Wondah how he likes dat?" and Jeremiah shook with mirth.

There were times when no flies could be found loafing around that nig, and this was one of the times.

Having looked out the landlord he proceeded to his room and to bed, leaving the proprietor to get in as best he could.

The boss of the house made a great fuss, banged on the door and yelled, when Peter, appreciating the situation, stuck out his head and shouted:

"Go away, you old tramp, or I'll shoot you full of holes."

That scared the fellow, and he cried, in thundering tones:

"Don't shoot! I'm the landlord."

"Tell that to a greenhorn. You can't fool me. Go away, or I'll fire. Sam, get your knife, and go out and carve that fellow into steaks."

That settled it.

The landlord got so scared that he ran away, and hid under a wagon in the yard till sunrise.

Sam left town that morning, and got one jog nearer the city, his supply of goods beginning to get pretty low.

He went into the next town with a big flourish of trumpets, the rustles looking at him open-mouthed as he rattled off his nonsense.

"Here we are, fellow hoodlums, Smart & Co., the first and foremost boy peddlers in the country, together with our celebrated troupe of comedians, singers, dancers and trained animals, all of which will make you open your eyes as well as your mouths."

"I am Sam Smart, the original comic singing peddler, and this is my partner, Mr. Peter Pocket, the supreme refined song and dance artist and lightning change salesman. All our songs are copyrighted and we'll knock spots out of anybody who tries to use 'em. Fakirs please take notice."

"Here we are and here is Solomon Smith, the funny coon and his father, Signor Jeremio Smithini, the terror on the cornet, who has played before all the royal families of Europe, Africa, Ireland and New Jersey, and is a master of his art. Jeremiah, blow the bugle."

That evening there was a big throng in the public square and nearly everybody bought something.

Sam started in with the usual comic business, so as to catch the crowd, and then put up a lot of small articles.

"Here is our champion shoe blacking and leather preserver, can be used in plum puddings or mince pies with excellent results, and makes a very fine fertilizer as well. Buy a box, and you'll never be without it. Ten cents, or six for half a dollar, and a collar button free."

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Pretty nearly everything did go, for a fact, for, when it began to get late, Sam knocked off half the price on lots of his smaller wares, and finally got to selling tooth paste, blacking and corn salve for a cent a box.

The next morning the wagon was overhauled and found to be pretty nearly empty, all the heavy and more valuable stuff having been disposed of at good prices.

Sam had no more goods waiting for him on the road, as he had made up his mind to close up as soon as possible, and the next move, therefore, was to dispose of what he had left.

It would not pay him to stay another night in the town, as he had so little, and he therefore sold all he had to the general store and left town with an empty wagon.

That gilded chariot was in rather a dilapidated condition by this time and looked as if it had been through the wars.

The paint was dingy, the springs were worn, the wheels were sprung, the axles were weak and if a good, healthy blizzard had come that way, there wouldn't have been enough left of that wagon to hold services over.

"Well, we may as well drive straight to New York," said Sam. "We haven't many miles to go, and we ought to be there to-morrow, at least."

Off they started, Sam and Peter on the box, Solomon and Jeremiah behind, and the dog, Moses, running alongside.

The mule had been sold and the cat was dead, and that was all that remained of the once extensive cavalcade.

They were rattling along through the country, when they suddenly came upon a railroad track at a sharp turn in the road.

There was no sign of its being there till they suddenly came upon it, and heard the roar of an approaching train.

The horses snorted and plunged, and Sam had all he could do to control them.

There was not time to cross the track nor to stop the frightened steeds and something must be done at once.

Sam, by a dexterous movement, wheeled his horses about, and dashed alongside the track with just room to spare and no more.

On came the train, the engine letting out a piercing shriek.

The horses plunged forward, the wagon swung suddenly around, and then went over like a shot as the train passed.

All hands were spilled out, but fortunately no one was hurt.

Jeremiah was thrown into a little tree and hung there.

Solomon was chucked head first into a ditch of muddy water, and came out looking like a tramp, and smelling worse than a skunk.

Sam and Peter were spilled out most unceremoniously, and sat on the ground by the roadside looking the picture of woe.

Their clothes were torn, their hats were smashed, and their shoes were bursted; but no bones were broken, and both soon recovered their spirits.

As for the wagon, it was a total wreck, and was good for nothing but kindling wood.

The collapse of the wonderful "one boss shay" was not more complete than the destruction of Sam's famous peddler's wagon.

The wheels were knocked into the middle of next week, the pole was made into toothpicks, the golden eagle was shattered to bits, the painted panels were split, and the whole thing was turned upside down, and converted into an entire and total wreck.

The horses were the only things that were not hurt, and Sam presently caught and led them into town.



"Well, Petey, my son," he said, cheerily, "we might as well get rid of the whole business now, sell the horses and go on by rail."

"Right you are, Samuel. That is decidedly our best plan."

Meanwhile, Jeremiah had dropped down from the tree, Solomon had washed himself in a brook close at hand, and the wrecked wagon was left where it had fallen.

Moses, the trick dog, never showed up again, and Sam and Peter finally came to the conclusion

that he had been so frightened that he had run away, never to return, and they never saw a sign of him, living or dead, after that.

Sam sold his four horses to a livery stable at a good price, and then the survivors of the wreck took the next train to New York, where they arrived safe and sound.

Sam and Peter went home, Jeremiah and Solomon were paid off and bounced, and Smart & Co. suspended operations for a time at least.

Sam and Peter went into business in the city,

and if they ever do anything worthy of notice it may be recorded at some future day.

Young Solomon is now a porter on a sleeping car, and bids fair to own the sleeper, and the road as well, if he keeps on as he has begun.

Jeremiah is the same old coon as ever, and still persists in the belief that without him no one would ever have heard of the famous firm of SMART & CO., THE BOY PEDDLERS.

[THE END.]

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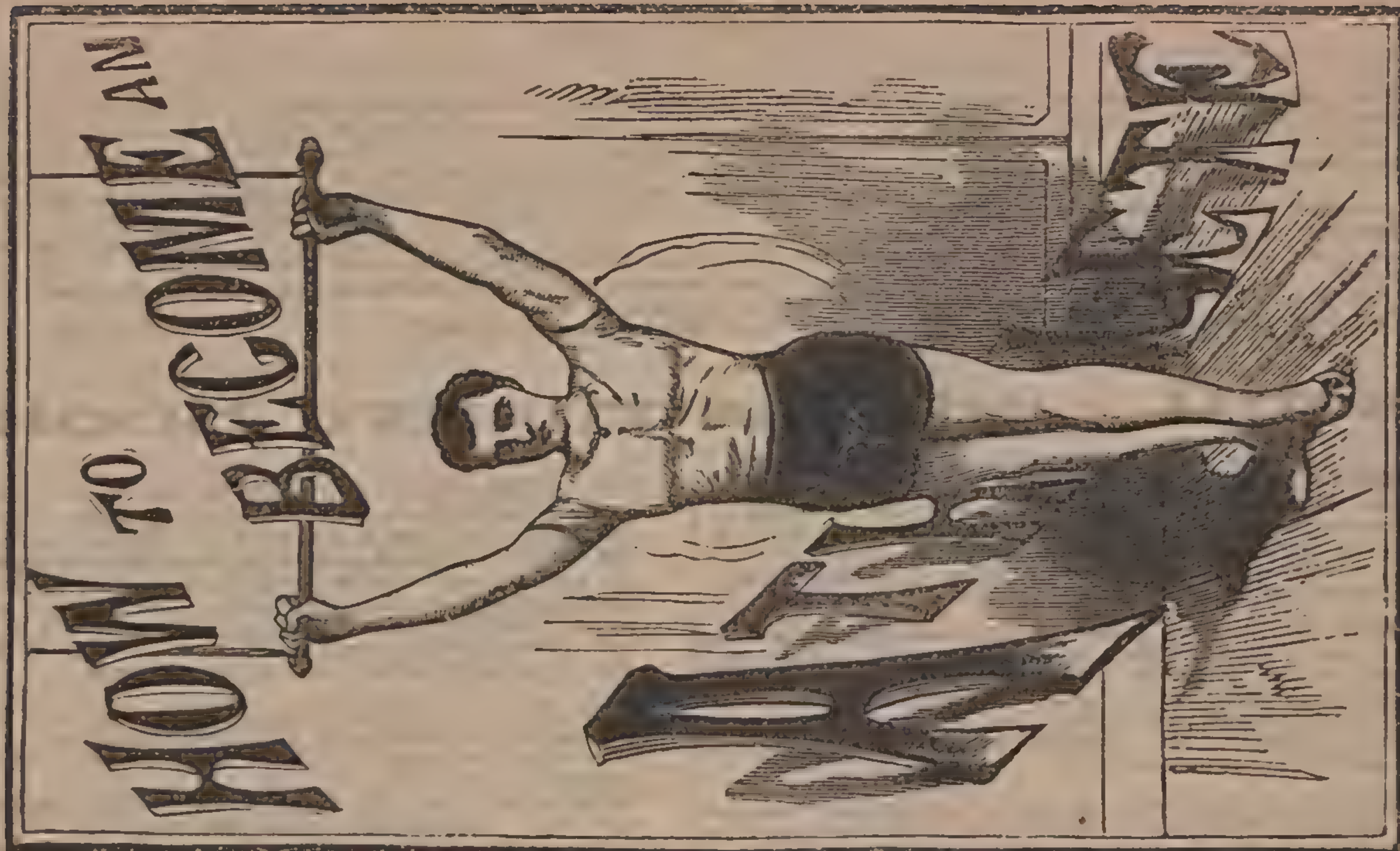
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A SPARKING JOURNAL FOR YOUNG LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

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### THE DANDY OF THE SCHOOL; OR, The Boys of Bay Cliff.

By FRANK FORREST,  
Author of "Over the Line," "The Two Hands at Oakdale," "Worth a Million," "An Old Road Case," "The Secret of Page 15," "The Sound the World Heard," "The Boy Railroad King," etc., etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE FIGHT ON THE FLOAT.

"DON'T you do that again, Walter Perrine—don't you dare to do it!"

"Do what?"

"Oh, you know well enough what I mean. You crowded me in the water. You know very well that I can't stand it with my head under. A little more and I might have been drowned."

"Oh, pahaw, Oscar! you're a big baby! It was only an accident. I didn't mean to crowd you. I was swimming on my back, and you might have got out of the way. I can't help it!"

"There, now! I suppose you'll lay that to me."

There was a sudden rush and a loud splash as over the edge of the float two boys went tumbling into the waters of Camansett Bay.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Charley Dows. "That's the way to fix 'em."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Lu Knapp and Jim Bunce in a breath.

Then came a series of splashes as one after another a good half dozen boys, clothed only in swimming-tights, leaped from the spring-board, some making "belly-whoppers," others

Thick and fast fell the blows, louder and louder grew the shouts of the boys, until all at once a telling hit from Walter taking Oscar squarely under the chin, sent him sprawling upon his back on the float.

striking on their backs and others, again, entering the water head first and with extended arms as all good divers should.

"Yes, that's the way to stop their squabbling!" shouted Jim Bunce, as he rose to the surface. "You two fellows are always at it. Yes, by George, boys, and they're at it again!"

For Oscar Dows, resenting this sudden immersion, had come to the surface spluttering and now gained the float upon which Walter Perrine had already climbed in a towering rage.

"What do you mean by shoving me again?" he demanded, fiercely, doubling up his fists and squaring off at Walter the instant he was on his feet.



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